WE
THE PARENTS

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR CHILDREN
AND TO THE WORLD TODAY

REVISED EDITION

By

SIDONIE MATSNER GRUENBERG



HARPER & BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS: NEW YORK

WE, THE PARENTS, Revised Edition

Copyright, 1939, 1948, by Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg

Printed in the United States of America

All rights in this book are reserved.
No part of the book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information address Harper & Brothers

H-X



TO MY HUSBAND,

who is the co-author of everything I write

(whether his name appears on the title page or not)

and

TO MY DAUGHTER

AND MY THREE SONS,

who have contributed liberally to my education



CONTENTS

	Foreword to First Edition	xi
	Foreword to Revised Edition	xvii
I	Authority and the Modern Parent	1
II	All Children Differ	26
III	What About the "Cardinal Virtues"?	43
IV	The Early Months and Early Years	65
V	Halfway Up the Stairs	101
VI	Toward Adulthood	120
VII	Learning the Uses of Money	145
VIII	Sex Education Today	169
IX	On Children and Reading	213
X	School, Home, and Community	236
XI	Radio, Movies, and the Comics	255
XII	The Modern Mother's Dilemma	279
XIII	Parents Are People	298
	Suggested Readings	304

Grateful acknowledgment is hereby made for permission to include material by the author which originally appeared in the following publications:

The Parents' Magazine
Child Study
Delineator
Woman's Day
'48
Baby Talk
Survey-Graphic
The Journal of Educational Sociology
The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science
1936 Yearbook of the Elementary Principals' Association

Also to THE VIKING PRESS for the use of some paragraphs from the author's book, *Parents, Children and Money*; to the CHILD STUDY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA for quotations from *Parents' Questions* and for the end papers used in this volume.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This small book represents a point of view that has grown through the years of my own parenthood and of intensive work with numberless parents in many parts of this country and in other countries, all of whom have enriched my insight and understanding. I am aware of my indebtedness also to the many professional workers with whom it has been my privilege to co-operate at various times.

The most distinctive contribution comes, I am sure, from the fact that for these many years my major work has been with the Child Study Association of America, in which several of us, without losing our identities, have pooled our thoughts and experience in the continuous consideration of the problems of parenthood and family life. There has thus emerged a unified outlook that has been of extreme value in all our efforts. I appreciate especially the stimulations and suggestions received from my close association with Cécile Pilpel, Anna W. M. Wolf and Ruth Brickner. My thanks are due to Berthe Goodkind and Aline Auerbach, also of the Child Study Association staff, for critical reading of the manuscript and for many suggestions; to Helen G. Sternau, whose familiarity with scientific and psychiatric studies has made her able edi-



torial assistance very valuable; to Deirdre Carr for her enthusiastic help with the chapter "The Early Months and Early Years"; to my daughter, Hilda Sidney, who collaborated with me patiently and gave me not only the benefit of her writing skill but the point of view of the younger generation. And I especially wish to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Josette Frank, who has worked very closely with me for many years on other projects, and who has brought to this book her distinctive experience and editorial ability. Finally, to Hettie Harris, my secretary for over fifteen years, goes my affectionate gratitude for her devotion and efficiency, which have played no small part in my ability to be in many places at once and to engage in the variety of activities into which I have been drawn by my concern for parents and children.

Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg
Westport, Connecticut
September, 1939

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

WE, THE PARENTS

For almost a century we have been striving consciously to improve the quality of our parenthood. We have had our failures and our successes. We have had all kinds of fads. We have had new freedom and new rules and restrictions too. But as a result of this experience, with all its ups and downs, we have made real and lasting gains. Outstanding among these of course is the immense advance in the safeguarding of children's health. For years very few children have died of measles in the great city of New York. There are still preventable losses, as we know, but parents are beginning to insist upon full use of our knowledge to safeguard all the children.

How profoundly our gains have affected our outlook was impressed on me a few years ago while traveling in a backward region of a less favored country. There the funeral of a baby was an almost daily occurrence; the little country stores carried in stock baby-size coffins trimmed with paper lace and colored papers—displayed casually, along with ginghams and groceries. Parents in this country and in this generation need no longer accept the loss of babies thus, as a matter of course.

In the early years the chief task of parent education was to teach parents how to raise their children to

healthy maturity. More recently we began to put new meanings into the word "healthy" including in it health of mind and spirit as well as health of body.

Fifty years ago a mother who used a book to guide her in the physical care of her child was often ridiculed. The old-timers knew, of course, by instinct and tradition, exactly what to do. It was proper and even laudable to look up recipes for baking cakes, but it was ridiculous to look up a formula for the baby's feeding! Yet some intrepid mothers braved the ridicule.

The modern generation of young mothers went a step beyond this. To know feeding formulas was not enough. One student of mine, who was, I believe, expressing the thoughts of many others, put it this way: "I don't think a college degree, a well paid business position, matrimony and the simple fact of having a baby is, of itself, ample preparation for the job of motherhood—at least, not to my satisfaction. When my baby was still in her early months, I heard one of the leaders in child training say, 'Remember that a child grows only once.' Now this was really no news to me, but I began to think, 'If your child can grow only once . . . you had better take everything these people offer you and use it as a yardstick against which to measure your intuition and your lingering old-fashioned belief that Mother knows best.' I consider my efforts so far in educating myself as a parent as a long-term investment upon which both my children and myself will eventually cash in. I am increasingly sure that being a mother is not easy . . . and I have found proof after proof that it is a much more interesting, much more important, and much better paying job than I had ever dreamed it could be."

During the thirty odd years of my own motherhood and of my work in parent education, I have noticed a great change in parents' questions. Instead of asking

"How shall I stop my child tearing books?"—they ask, "What can I give my child to do that is more interesting?" Parents no longer expect that everything can be settled by learning what to do. They want to know not merely what to do but how to understand the nature of these children they are guiding.

Modern psychology and psychiatry are helping parents to find this increased insight. When, for instance, four-year-old Johnny pushes over his ten months old sister who is just learning to walk, we no longer ask, "How shall I punish him so that he won't do that again?" Our greater concern is not that Johnny is *causing* trouble, but that he is *in* trouble. We know that we have to help him out of it. We try to make him feel that he has a place in the family, that his parents' affection for him has not suffered through the advent of this much-prized little sister. We know that his behavior will take care of itself if we can help him deal with the very natural, but very unhappy, feelings which lie behind it.

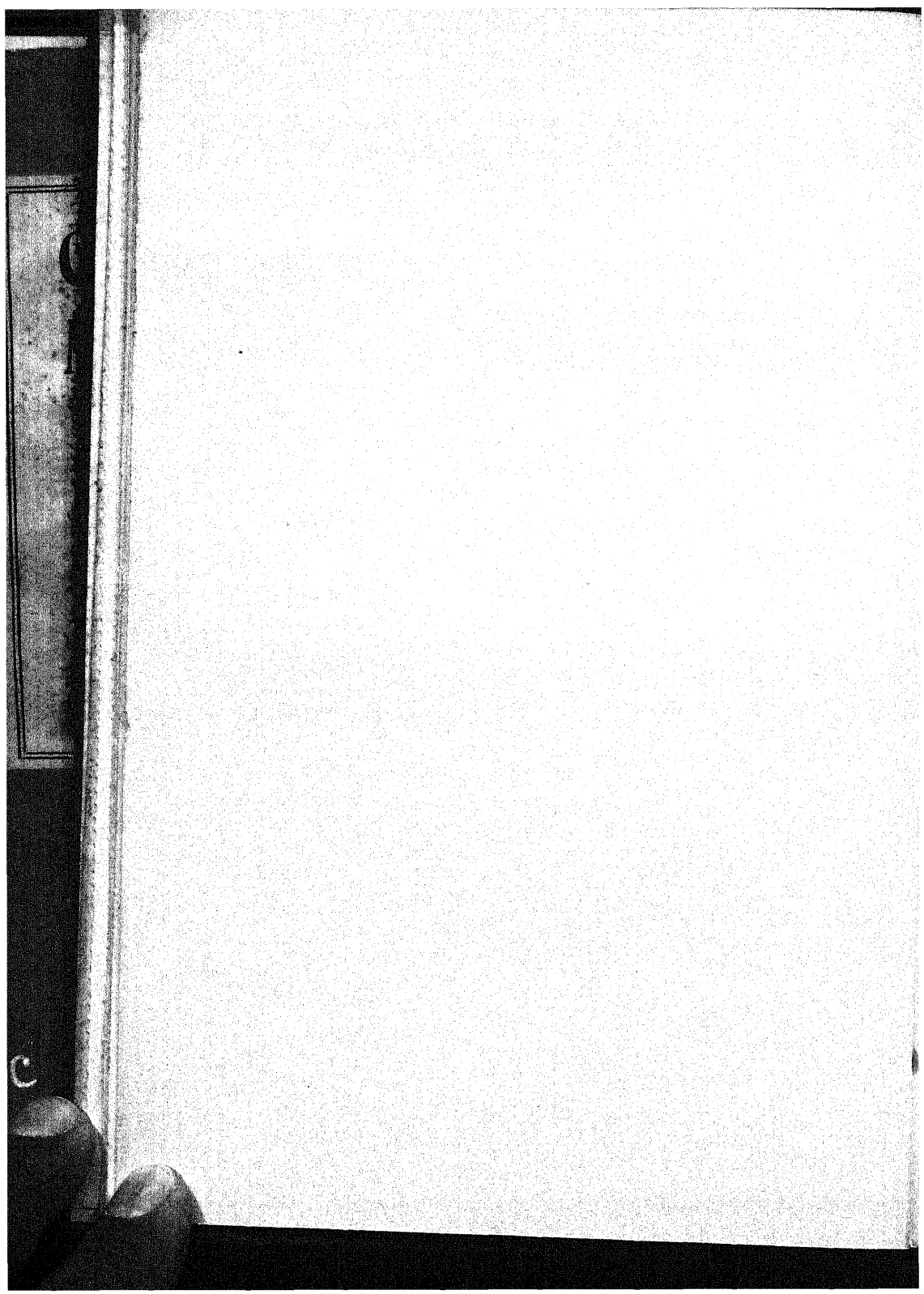
Modern mothers accept as a matter of course many of the things we once thought so daring, and over which we spent so much thought and energy. Where babies come from is explained by mothers today in straightforward, simple language, little by little, as the child wants to know more. The stork answer is now relegated to the realm of fairy tales. These mothers recognize, too, that an ounce of work and play shared with father is worth a pound of discipline. In homes where fathers and mothers really participate in their children's interests, where the relationship is a genuinely happy one, occasions for severe discipline are relatively few. Today's parents know that a child needs a room of his own, or perhaps only a corner of the living room, where he can do things freely. They think of him as an individual, with needs and interests of his own.

Thus parent education has made for sounder health and deeper understanding of people. With this understanding there has come a broader concept of the task, a new readiness to include the larger phases of family and community living within the province of parent education. We realize today that parents cannot be instructed in the management of children as if this were, or ever could be, an isolated concern. The function of parent education, as we now see it, is to increase parents' understanding of themselves, of the world they live in, of the problems inherent in marriage and in child development. Parents who face life with knowledge and realism will be better equipped to enjoy their children, to accept the partnership which is marriage, and to relish family living. For in the last analysis it is not so much what we *do* that counts, as what we *are*. It is the relationships which exist in a family group which make or break its members.

Parents today are seeking for ways to live *with,* not *for,* their children. They are searching for ways in which the older and the younger can more deeply enjoy and appreciate each other. They are freer than ever before of the ancient anxieties over the family health and so freer to deal with human relationships. Nor can this interest end within the family group. Inevitably it must broaden to include those larger relationships between the changing family and the changing community life of which it is a part.

Parent education in the world of today is concerned with developing the personality of the individual in all his relations. This has a larger significance than the pursuit of happiness by the individual parent or child. Just as in an earlier generation there were those who ridiculed the knowledge-seeking parent, so today there are many who scoff at our preoccupation with the minutiae of personal relationships in the face of staggering world prob-

lems. But to me it seems that it is right here within these relationships that we must find the key to a better world. If we hope ever to have a form of social life—national and international—constructive and cooperative and free from the devastating aggressions and vindictiveness that we see all around us today, we must start by building well-rounded personalities through better family life. For democracy is more than a point of view, more than a political form of government—it is a way of life. It is inherent in the relationships of people with one another; hence its roots are in the family. Democracy begins at home. Living decently together is not merely for the family, with which we have concerned ourselves, but for all humanity.



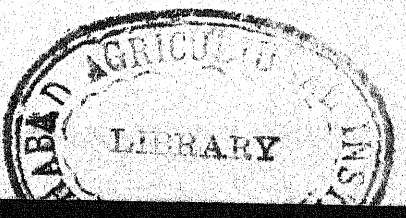
FOREWORD TO REVISED EDITION

As I was completing the first edition of this book in August of 1939, the radio was bringing me Hitler's harsh voice, threatening disaster. He was preparing to invade Poland; and what followed brought a great era to its end in a short time.

The nine eventful years since then have made us all aware how important children are. But also, in those years, we were rapidly becoming aware that—next to children—parents are the most important people in the country. And parents too have been feeling themselves more and more important, but greatly concerned because they are not sure that they can live up to their importance.

In this new edition, I have taken into account what scientists and practical experience—and the war itself—have taught us about child development and children's needs and people's worries.

I have added a new chapter, The Modern Woman's Dilemma; for the war and the uneasy interlude leading to we know not what have greatly emphasized the anomalous position of woman in our modern society. Trained in ever-larger numbers for a skilled trade or profession, she is normally interrupted for the serious business of raising a family, but without any preparation for finding



her way back to her special work, which has in any case also been changing in various ways.

I have given special attention to the forces operating within the family, creating misgivings and tensions. And I have discussed also the forces in our civilization that act upon the family and its members—in powerful ways that disturb us, but that we must learn to recognize and control.

It is gratifying that this book, while addressed to parents, has found itself frequently in the hands of men and women working *with* parents—professional leaders of classes in parent education, marriage and family counselors, instructors in family life in colleges and high schools, social workers, and others.

New York, July 1948 S.M.G.

WE
THE PARENTS



I

AUTHORITY AND THE MODERN PARENT

The title of this chapter would seem to present an anomaly. Is not authority a vestige of old-fashioned parenthood? Does not the modern parent repudiate and disclaim it? Does not our new striving toward freedom and democracy rule out authority for the modern parent?

Authority is probably among the earliest concepts of which we have any record for in monuments and altars and temples are embodied man's submission to the lords of the heavens and the earth. Our feeling toward authority is now and has ever been one of the strongest factors determining the direction of our lives as children and as adults, as individuals and as nations. It is not surprising, therefore, that today, with dictatorship ascendant in many parts of the world, with its pattern of authoritarian direction standing in sharp contrast to the rampant "freedom" of the very recent past, many parents are finding it important to re-value the place of authority in children's lives.

Our concern for the individual has sometimes led us to an exaggerated caution lest we inhibit the child's impulses or creative urges in one direction or another. Many modern parents find themselves acutely reluctant to exercise authority. "Who am I," they say with due humility, "to set myself up as an authority—to tell my child what

is best for him to do or not to do? Perhaps, by some sure instinct of his own he will find out better than I can tell him." We may, it is true, be faulty guides. We may not always know how to counsel what is best. The question, however, is not whether we should or should not impose our questionable wisdom. It is, rather, how the child is to get such help as he undoubtedly needs from the experience of the race, the accumulated experience of our own years, and our hard-won knowledge. And who in this case is responsible to the child, if not the parent?

The parent's humility may be well warranted. Many of us envy the parents of the past who were able to declare in the most convinced and convincing manner what they knew to be the truth, what they knew was right. We, alas, lack that comforting assurance, and so find it extremely difficult to maintain an authoritative attitude. We may be disconcerted by the appalling consequences of authoritarian practice in our own experience or in the world at large. We may be sincerely puzzled by the fact that there are so many conflicting claims to truth and virtue which cannot all be valid. Even the least skeptical of us feel that many of the authorities whose voices we hear are justly subject to question or even suspicion. We have in the past been frightened by authorities, even deceived and mistreated by them. Like our own rebellious children, we are often tempted, when confronted with an overconfident voice, to ask, "How do you know?"

Authority Necessary

Certainly we cannot support authority in the abstract and it is natural to ask whether authorities are not, like other outmoded institutions, ready for the scrap heap. Yet in almost every situation some authority is necessary, even while we reserve the right to question or to challenge it; we cannot rely at every point upon our own in-

stincts and impulses. Perhaps our need is to distinguish between authority in the abstract and the various authorities without which we cannot get along. In situations in which we recognize our own limitations, we seek expert counsel, specialized authority. In matters of health and hygiene we consult specialists as a matter of course, and in many other fields we have to find individuals in whom we can have confidence, who have attained authority through experience and insight. When a house is to be built or a garden planted, one's own preferences are important factors in the final decision, to be sure, but one depends also upon the architect's knowledge of materials or the horticulturalist's knowledge of soil. One's own preferences determine the way in which the counsel of these authorities is used; they do not eliminate the need for correct information as a basis for choice. There would be little satisfaction in building a house that caved in or in planting a garden that failed to grow, under the illusion of "perfect freedom".

In clarifying their own position as authorities in the home, parents must from the very first guard against slipping into the easy and misleading fallacy of assuming that "authority" and "freedom" are simple alternatives. However devoutly we may believe in freedom and in the individual's right to express himself, we are bound to recognize that children—even older children—need the security of parental control and guidance. The individual will be able to use freedom with more confidence if he knows that a wise and firm authority is standing by to save him from suffering the results of his own ignorance or folly. The more impulsive, the more imaginative, the more enterprising a child may be, the more his own inner security demands that he be told, or directed, or guided —or stopped. In his investigating and experimenting with life, he often needs help from adults to teach what is of

value, how things work, what he may and what he may not do with impunity. In his struggles with his own unbridled impulses, he needs the security of feeling that someone else can stop him when he can no longer stop himself.

Responsibility and Authority

Parents have always accepted this responsibility and have assumed authority in the rearing of their children. That there have been inconsistencies at times and that there are inconsistencies among experts today is all in the order of things. The rules followed and the devices used in rearing children have always been determined in any particular culture by the prevailing concept of human nature, and the prevailing ideas of social good. When people accepted the Calvinistic doctrine that the child is "born bad" they believed also that he must be made "good" by a rigorous discipline which would repress his evil impulses. At other periods they believed, with Rousseau and his followers, that the child's native impulses were naturally right and should be given complete freedom of expression. With the rise of democracy went a simple faith in the principle of equality and freedom that mistrusted all control. In each case, people's beliefs and actions were born of the particular values emphasized by the religious, political, economic, and scientific forces of their times.

As the individual came to be more and more respected in our social and political life it was natural that the discipline of children should take on greater concern for the development of the individuality of the child. Thus the democratic faith in the importance of the individual, together with the objective view of life afforded by modern science, contributed to the creation of new concepts of authority, freedom and discipline. The result has been the

development, for the first time, of a democratic home. In this home authority is neither glorified nor disparaged; it is regarded as a necessary implement for helping human beings to make the most of their lives, for themselves and for society. That is, authority is no longer regarded as an absolute that exists for and by itself, but as a means toward common, human ends. Individuality and initiative are stressed as essential to true democratic living, and obedience as a basic virtue diminishes in value. Obedience, nevertheless, has an important role to play in the rearing of children, and in various adult relationships as well. We must use it as a temporary instrument in managing and guiding the child until we have developed other means, or until the child himself is ready to make his own choices, to determine adequately his own lines of conduct.

Discipline—Positive and Negative

It is obvious that the very young child must attain certain regularities in the management of his physical processes and that he must learn to curb and redirect many of his various impulses. He is too young to discriminate between wisdom and folly and when we try to explain words fail us. The earliest discipline consists very largely, therefore, of teaching him some of the elemental things that he may or may not do. Discipline is, however, a positive and progressive experience, not merely a repression of the child's impulses or a denial of his wishes. It is concerned with what the child does and with how, eventually, he directs himself, as well as with preventing errors or misdeeds.

These positive aspects appear quite as early in life as do the negative. Even a child of nine months can learn that there is a time and place for doing things—learn in a constructive way instead of through mere negation. A baby sitting in his high-chair near a table, stretches out his

hand and reaches for the newspaper. If it is today's paper we quickly snatch it from him with every indication of our disapproval; we may even feel it necessary to slap his hand. But if, by chance it is *yesterday's* paper that he reaches for, we smilingly indulge his desire to tear or crumple it. Now the child has not read the date-line and cannot know any reason why the same act or impulse should yield different results on different occasions. In a world of caprice one cannot learn. Suppose now that when he stretches out his hand for today's paper you exchange this for some paper that he may have, may even tear if he wants to. Then he will have learned that tearing paper is, in itself, neither bad nor forbidden, but that *certain* papers are not to be torn. This procedure applies to everything one does before the child can understand words or reasons.

You hold a little child firmly by the hand in crossing the street—for his protection, of course. But since he cannot sense the danger from which you are protecting him, he may merely feel and resent the restraint. If, however, you release his hand promptly as soon as the danger zone is passed, he learns gradually that there is a time when he can be free and a time when he can not. You tell him, in effect, "Now you can go alone," and, "Now I must hold you". Thus he feels that there is justice and consistency in the grown-up, who represents not merely restraint, but restraint at certain times, under certain conditions. You may have to make a child sit still on some occasions but the child should come to know that this is not erratic or permanent interference, but a temporary restraint for a particular reason, to be followed as soon as possible by permission to jump and run again. Thus he will be less disposed to resent your intrusions and more disposed to feel confident of your wisdom and good will.

Children Want Guidance

Children in fact, welcome some outward control. This control, however, need not be punitive, nor arbitrary, nor need it take the form of verbal rules. Children are aware of our approvals and disapprovals, our stop and go signals, whether or not we put them into the form of commands and forbiddings. An excellent illustration of the power of the unspoken word was related by a grandmother who felt that she was too much given to saying "don't" to her small grandson of three. Determined to be modern she decided not to interfere with him, although interference might seem to be warranted, and on his next visit she was all set to watch herself on this point. When at lunch little George began to scrape his spoon back and forth vigorously across her polished mahogany table she opened her mouth to protest but promptly closed it again, the words unspoken. "What did you say, Grandma?", asked George. "I didn't say anything, dear." Whereupon she was astonished to hear George murmur softly to himself, "Don't do that, George, you might scratch the table!" And he promptly obeyed the direction of the inner voice!

In the name of freedom, and to avoid the implications of authority, parents frequently offer children choices in situations which actually permit no choice at all. "Do you want to go to bed now, darling?" implies that the child may choose, that he has sufficient wisdom or foreknowledge to judge the amount of sleep he will need in order to feel refreshed and ready for another day. This is at best a rhetorical question; for darling never wants to go to bed, and mother ought to know that.

The Child's Choices

Certain choices, however, do properly belong within the child's capacity and his prerogatives, and through

such choices, even with mistakes, he learns many essential lessons at first hand. "Would you like to play with your blocks now?" is a perfectly proper question, but, "Do you want to put your blocks away now that you've finished playing?" is not. To put our commands in the form of questions, implying choices, fools no one but ourselves and the children will be quick to detect the weakness in this gesture and to make the most of it. There are certain points upon which we have a right to be arbitrary. For example, we certainly know better than our five-year-old whether or not the out-of-door temperature calls for a sweater. If then, we say to him, "Aren't you cold? Don't you want your sweater?", we are either dishonest or thoroughly negligent in offering him such a choice! Suppose the answer is, as sooner or later it will be, "No, I don't want a sweater!", where does that leave us? And where do we go from there?

After all, there is an authoritative relationship between the adult and the child implicit in our responsibility to guide and protect him. We cannot free him by disclaiming authority. There is, in fact, no surer way to make him helpless. The child is dependent not alone for guidance and information but for the opportunity to acquire his own knowledge and skill and self-control, and, through them, independence. Whether he grows up repressed or free depends upon the *quality* of the authority which the parent exercises, upon the relationship which develops between parent and child.

Will the child accept guidance too readily or will he rebel? Will he become submissive and fail to assert himself or will he combat all authority, at home and in the outside world? Such choices are not necessary. To fear them is a sign of faulty adjustment to authority on the part of the parent. If we have ourselves adjusted our lives to a mature acceptance of authority so that we

neither follow it blindly nor rebel against it, then we can face without fear the responsibility for controlling others —and exercise our power with wisdom and consistency.

Authority and Freedom

The attitude that a child develops toward authority in the home affects his relations with his parents, his teachers and his playmates, and profoundly affects his attitude toward the various authorities that he meets throughout his life. Where there is too rigid control in the home, the children are likely to react by abusing freedom whenever they manage to get out of bounds or by losing their capacity for freedom entirely. If, on the other hand, the home sets up no restraints, no checks, no criteria for their behavior, the children, spurred on by their own unchecked impulses, will soon run afoul of some of the less yielding regulations with which we govern our daily conduct and social living, and of which they had no forewarning. It should be possible for the home to avoid the absolute of either extreme. Authority is not synonymous with oppression, nor is freedom defeated by guidance.

When people speak of "discipline" they usually mean restraint or punishment. But if we think of discipline in the larger sense, as the way in which the child makes his positive adjustments, we come to see our disciplinary devices, our punishments and rewards, as mere tools to be used when the child fails to meet a situation himself—or we fail to anticipate it. It is not through devices or negations, however, that we discipline the child, for true discipline goes on positively through all his various activities. Punishment does not show the child the way that he should go but, at best, only points out the way that he should not go.

Much of the common thought regarding punishment as a factor in discipline is like our common attitude

toward therapeutic medicine. It contemplates a constant succession of acute situations that demand remedial treatment, whereas the problem is so to manage day by day that acute situations seldom arise. When acute situations do arise, they must be handled constructively for the child's growth. This, of course, challenges our ability to see in the child's actions the indications of his deeper needs, of his motives, conflicts and difficulties. Punishment may be indicated or it may have not the slightest constructive value.

Punishments

The importance of recognizing the child's point of view and his real motives—of which he is usually unaware—is illustrated again and again in family life. One mother was getting ready to take her two little girls, of six and eight years, to the circus. This was to be a glorious adventure and the children had been looking forward eagerly to the event. As the moment for departure arrived the mother noticed that the younger child's hands were quite unpresentable and sent her off to wash them clean. The child went and returned with remarkable alacrity but her hands did not even show evidence of a "lick" and the mother was indignant. The child had deceived her, lied in fact, without having said a word, except that she was ready, which truthfully represented her state of mind. "You have lied to me, Barbara, and you know that is wrong! I am going to punish you. You can't go to the circus this afternoon!" That was about as severe a punishment as was possible under the circumstances. Barbara whimpered, but her head was unbowed. "If you leave me here, I shall scream and scream until all the neighbors come," she declared and her mother knew that she meant it. What should she do? The maid wouldn't stand for that; the neighbors wouldn't

stand for that. She hastily changed her mind and took Barbara along. Perhaps she shook the child, perhaps she muttered dire threats for future delivery; the historian is silent on these points. With the best of intentions, this mother committed serious blunders in the name of authority and discipline. And, like large numbers of other parents, she continued to cultivate resentment and hostilities and mental confusion in her children.

Let us consider but one element of this episode. Very little reflection should enable us to understand that at the moment of leaving for the keenly anticipated trip to the circus the child was in no mood to be sent away from the point of departure or from the head of the expedition. Granted that the hands needed washing, an understanding mother would have coupled her request with an assurance to the child that there was plenty of time and that everyone would wait until she was ready. Moreover, after the mother had blundered by sending the child away without such assurance, she sank deeper into the treacherous quicksand by converting the child's perfectly normal, even if unapproved, response into a lie. This again, was unnecessary. Now she was put into the awkward position of either treating this "lie" as a primary wrong —with the calamity noted—or of ignoring the lie, which would have been equally disastrous. That the mother was angry and acted accordingly anyone can see. But it is equally clear that she might have met the situation at each step more calmly, more effectively, more constructively. And obviously, too, it need never have become a "situation" at all. If we are to handle disciplinary situations constructively, we have to be clear in our own minds both what we are aiming for and what we are working with.

Fourteen-year-old Tommy was "punished" for having neglected to mow the lawn and to do his other chores by

being kept in the house for a week. Tommy was a fairly responsible boy, as boys go, but at this stage of his young life he was slow to accept tasks and to adjust himself to disagreeable necessities. His parents, instead of standing by patiently and hopefully and helpfully for the gradual and uneven growth of dependability and stability, were eager to get certain important lessons learned once and for all. Some once-and-for-all lessons that we seek to teach by means of "punishment" are perhaps learnable, especially in the earlier years. Whether a week in the house without freedom or privileges can teach a fourteen-year-old boy such a lesson is at least doubtful. The parents may get some satisfaction from a display of power; they can show their son and the neighbors who is the boss. They can hardly claim, however, that they have advanced Tommy's dependability, or his devotion to his duties, or his resolution to overcome the disagreeable or difficult tasks that he is bound to meet in life. And what of a fourteen-year-old's resentment of such treatment? In Tommy's case it actually turned him to abusing the younger children and to sly sabotage against the equipment hatefully associated with his unpleasant chores and his humiliating imprisonment.

Nature's Way

Even in the application of negative discipline, some parents seek to avoid responsibility, justifying themselves on the ground that the child's digressions from the straight and narrow path should bring their own natural punishments. Followed to its logical conclusions this thesis often becomes untenable. A child loses his new coat. It is winter. Should he therefore be compelled to go without a coat? Dare we always let him suffer the consequences of his own acts, whether of negligence or deliberate disobedience? Obviously not, since the conse-

quences are often out of all proportion to what he has done. Even if it were possible, would such a course be desirable? Is not the home the very place where the child must above all feel safe? Home is the place where the child must be helped to learn from his mistakes, not forced to suffer from them. It is the place where people trust in him and have faith that he will not remain at his present level forever or be forever judged by his present weaknesses and shortcomings. Here he is being helped to grow. If he lies to his playmates, the consequence may be that they will not in future believe him; he will be labeled a "liar". But parents and teachers know that he is only eight years old and that learning to be truthful is part of the growing process in which he needs their assistance. While helping him to understand the value of truthfulness, they must help him also to retain his self-respect and his confidence in his ability to rise to higher levels.

Confusing Issues

Another difficulty in the management of penalties is the premium we sometimes place upon confession. "If you tell me the truth, I shan't punish you!" This would seem to dismiss the misdemeanor as of minor importance. What do we hope the child will learn from this experience? That any kind of behavior is permissible if only it is frankly admitted? Of course, parents wish to keep the child's confidence; but by offering in advance to trade forgiveness for confession they trap themselves and confuse the child's scheme of values while he is in process of learning what is, and what is not, acceptable behavior.

A mere confession cannot wipe the slate clean. Even punishment often fails to do so for no matter how logical we try to be it is hard to "make the punishment fit the crime". As a matter of fact a child often welcomes a punishment, for he considers it a fair retribution and it

helps to rid him of feelings of guilt. He likes to know that whatever his transgression has been, it is liquidated, finished, cleaned up. In certain cases this businesslike procedure is perfectly legitimate and the child's unconscious wish may well be satisfied by some appropriate punishment. The "crime", however, must be serious enough to warrant careful consideration and yet not so serious that there is a danger of confusing several issues or of falsifying values. We do not always know how deeply or how long a child retains a sense of guilt for an act which may have seemed to us but trivial or of passing moment. As a rule, however, given assurance of the adults' confidence and faith in him, he will eventually work off these feelings in the course of learning and growing.

Buying Absolution

These processes are well illustrated by the following story. Thirteen-year-old Joan had just purchased, out of her newly acquired dress allowance, her very first two-piece dress and was looking forward with great excitement to wearing it next morning for the opening of high school. To tease her, her ten-year-old brother threatened the new dress with his own new fountain pen. Though he had certainly never meant to carry out his threat, suddenly the lovely orange wool showed a spattering of black ink. Joan was furious and rushed to her mother demanding, "What are you going to do to him?" Her voice said plainly that hanging would be too good! The mother was sympathetic but she paused to consider. To deduct from his allowance to pay for the cleaning would only put him in debt and make him feel that his guilt had been absolved.

The mother quieted Joan and helped her see that Frank was sincerely sorry for what he had done, and furthermore, that he would really rather pay for the damage to the dress and be through with it all. This last concept was

hard for Joan to get, but she finally realized that it was not fair to let Frank feel he could pay with money for all the injury his thoughtlessness had caused. Payment could not wipe out the irritation and the disappointment, for the dress could not be back from the cleaners in time. The boy was contrite enough and no punishment would help to intensify his feelings or clarify to him what was significant in his act. They decided to let the matter rest so far as any "punishment" went. Later they found that the inkspot could not be cleaned out but the mother designed an embroidered ornament to cover it. Thus the episode had an apparently happy ending and the matter was forgotten—or so, at least, it seemed.

Almost a year later the little boy was taken to a fair. Once there, he searched everywhere for something suitable to buy as "a present for Joan". Finally he found it—an orange scarf with a black design on it. His mother asked, "Why did you buy a present for Joan—just for her and for no one else?"

"Oh, I guess it was the inkspots", was his sheepish reply. "I wanted to buy her something pretty that was orange and ink."

Perhaps Frank had carried his feeling of guilt with him a little too long, but he had a chance to work it out in his own way without mixing this feeling with resentment toward his sister or his mother.

Cultivating Relationships

In the modern family parents are challenged, as never before, to a wise practice of discipline. For today, with our small, widely-spaced families, our relationships are largely those of two adults and one child, or, at any rate, one child at a time. Furthermore, the relationship is a prolonged one, since the children now remain dependent upon their parents for many years. More important than

the establishing of any set of habits or accomplishments, therefore, is the building of a relationship between us and our children that will stand through the years. How we will get along with our children at sixteen and eighteen and twenty will depend very much on how we live with them at one and two and four and ten. Not even to hasten the most desirable changes in their conduct or character may we strain these precious relationships.

What we say and do to our children counts heavily in the family of today not only because it has fewer members on whom to rub off the edges but also because our contacts with our children are fewer and more concentrated. In the family of a few generations ago a father might deal harshly with his boy before breakfast and wash out the incident in the course of their work together before lunch. Today the irate father dashing through his breakfast to catch the 8:15 train has to ask himself some questions his father never had to ask: "Can I afford to have this quarrel as my only contact with my son today? And how often can I afford it?"

This does not mean that we are never to show anger, never to let our children feel the weight of our disapprovals or annoyance. The children are quite willing to have us be ourselves, and if "being ourselves" means being occasionally angry or annoyed—and showing it—they will at least recognize these as human responses to whatever behavior of theirs has called them forth. It is a part of their learning to discover that certain things make us angry. At times, too, this natural response of anger serves as a safety valve, not only for our own emotions, but for the child's feelings of guilt when he knows he has transgressed. He may even try to avoid in future that particular behavior. But whether he does or not, he would infinitely prefer an occasional tempest of feeling which indicates that parents, too, are human beings, to a con-

trolled silence whose meaning he cannot fathom. We have all seen homes in which order and control are the watchword, in which voices are never raised in anger and the discipline seems to operate faultlessly by remote control, yet where the children are not happy. We have seen homes, too, where the mother occasionally screams at the children, or even "smacks" them when she is sorely tried, yet the children seem to be not a wit disturbed, nor even cowed into good behavior. The difference, on closer analysis, will be found to lie in the amount of real affection and interest operating in the relationships. The parent who has a warm affection and interest in his child, who shares in his activities and listens with real attention to his recounting of the high spots and low spots of his day, who does not retire behind a newspaper when the child is full of a need to be heard—that parent may lose his temper occasionally with impunity, and even, perhaps with good effect. From such parents children are willing to accept scolding or even punishment when they know it has been deserved.

Beneath the Surface

The method that is used depends entirely on the person who is using it and even within the same family there are variations. A mother who used the best known procedures with her child was very distressed because the father, who did "everything wrong" from her point of view, got much better results. For instance, in order to hurry their boy to bed, he would say, "If you get into bed right away, I'll read to you. Otherwise, I won't," and the child would hurry. When the father was away, the mother tried to do the same thing and the child said, "It won't work with you." He had made a much better rapport with the father than with the mother and therefore could take even punitive measures or threats from him.

We must not be misled, however, for though we can punish or even slap a child and leave our relationship intact, we must not rely upon either punishments or rewards to solve situations or alter fundamental difficulties. Both punishments and rewards may produce a result—even a quick result—upon behavior. They do not touch the sources of that behavior. In physical therapy we do not use violent drugs to cure the symptoms of disease; we probe for the roots of the disease itself and content ourselves with slow but sure progress. We have learned to mistrust panaceas in the treatment of illness and we must learn to shun them in the treatment of behavior.

We must recognize too that certain behavior is not a subject for ordinary discipline at all, but for deep emotional therapy. Often the behavior is itself only a manifestation of an emotional need or disturbance which cannot be touched by any punishment or reward. The child who is sullen, who is unusually destructive, or even cruel, often needs help for inner difficulties. The child who invariably "acts up" when company arrives, whose compliance even is marked by annoying forms of protest, who deliberately counts upon his "nuisance value" even at the risk of certain punishment—such a child shows evidence of a basic problem. Punishment may relieve us for the moment of his annoying presence, rewards may make him for a brief space more comfortable to live with, but both are fruitless. The basic problem remains to be dealt with.

Emergency Versus Continuity

Rewards, like punishments, are emergency devices to which we resort when, in our day by day dealings, we fail to get things done as we should like. It is possible to use our special rewards as temporary stimuli to help the child over difficult spots. But we must not make of them

permanently needed inducements for being decent and meeting one's obligations. What the long time effects will be will depend largely upon our own way of thinking of rewards and so upon the way in which we administer them. One parent, for example, says, "If you work hard at school and bring home a good report I shall let you go to the movies on Saturday,"—implying that unless the child does, the parent won't. There is at best a rather arbitrary connection between the child's school work and his Saturday amusement. In quite a different spirit another parent says on seeing a good report, "I know you worked hard for this and I'm very pleased. Let's go to the movies Saturday to celebrate your success!" The child has done the work for various motives or under various pressures; the "treat" now signifies mother's sharing in the pleasure of his achievement.

Because rewards offer an easy way to "get results" we must guard against using them in a manner which can only confuse the children. There is a world of difference between saying, "If you eat your vegetables I'll give you some dessert", and saying, "When you've finished your vegetables you'll have your dessert."

Parents who depend heavily upon rewards and punishments to achieve their discipline are likely at some point to reach an impasse. There comes a time when the children weigh and measure. Perhaps the fun of a transgression may be worth the penalty risked or perhaps the reward is not worth the effort or sacrifice involved.

Allow for Growth

While it remains true that pains and pleasures furnish the motives for doing and for refraining, a simple reward-and-punishment system sooner or later breaks down because it fails to consider the child's possibilities for growth. As he grows older he needs a chance to discover

guiding principles and motives for his conduct in his own purposes and ideals, in his regard for others and his desire for their approval, and in his own self-respect and aspirations. The ascent is from being distracted, as an infant, from what he wants by something just as amusing but permissible, from being punished or rewarded (sometimes in ways that are unrelated to the immediate situation). It is toward being applauded or reproved, in ways that are more and more general—as with a spontaneous expression of pleasure, a word of appreciation, a smile of acknowledgment, or even a momentary silence.

We may say that the child moves toward maturity from preoccupation with motives that are concrete and tangible, like toys or candies and other material means of satisfaction (or from being deprived of these), to the more tenuous and at last purely symbolic assurances that his conduct is in harmony with the standards of those for whom he has the highest regard, or with whom he seeks to be identified.

At three years the child may perhaps be "rewarded" for keeping quiet during granny's napping time; at six years he should be quiet because he understands what rest and disturbance mean to others and because he has developed relations to others that include that kind of consideration. It is one thing for the child to learn to "behave" so as to please the authorities, or at least to avoid antagonizing them; it is another thing to learn that right and wrong are connected with fundamental and long-time relationships to the world and to our fellows.

Sometimes our own devices come back like boomerangs to demonstrate our long-term failure. The doctor who treated a little girl's enuresis by offering stars for a dry bed each morning and a doll for a constellation of twenty stars, was delighted with his success. But after the doll

was presented the enuresis returned. "But why", asked the doctor, when the "cured" child was brought back to the clinic, "why do you do this again, since you know better now?" "But don't I need a doll carriage?" was the candid reply.

The same principle holds true in punishing a child for certain sins of omission or of commission. Often the punishment so overshadows the act itself that the supposed purpose of the punishment is forgotten altogether. One young girl, now in her teens, remembers most painfully the most severe punishment she ever had. Her father was sent for to come to school. But she cannot at all recall what she had done to bring down upon her this humiliating penalty.

The child's activities and the requirements made upon him, often for very good reasons, seem in many cases to be unrelated to his own interests and even to his own need for growth. This in itself creates situations that tempt us to resort to rewards and punishments. Most parents would find it revealing and profitable to spend some time in a sane "progressive" school where the child's own interests and needs are the center of all his activities. They would be astonished to see the children going about their various tasks and studies, accomplishing all the essential "learnings" for which we maintain schools, with none of the rewarding and penalizing which we have assumed to be inseparable from discipline—not even the badges and marks and ribbons that many older people prize so highly.

Scoring Ourselves

You can score your skill as a parent by the number of times you find it necessary to reward and to punish. The frequency of punishments and rewards is in inverse ratio to the effectiveness of our positive guidance or discipline.

With increased confidence in ourselves, we will find less and less need to rely upon penalties and threats to support our authority. We will also learn that there are no punishments that will make children truthful, no rewards that will make them neat, no matter how we may succeed in threatening or bribing them into a simulation of these virtues. We will discover in this process, how futile and meaningless it is, even if it were desirable, to check ourselves day by day in terms of acquired virtues.

The controls which we exercise for the protection and guidance of the child are meant to be temporary. Sooner or later, we assume, the personality will be sufficiently mature to go on without being watched at each step. We have to see that the maturing child acquires his self-assurance and his skills bit by bit and day by day, even if we are not quite sure as to the nature of that conscience on which we like to rely, that small voice that serves philosophers and psychologists and moralists as an inexhaustible theme for speculation and dispute.

In Search of a Conscience

The mother of a modern little boy of four was reading him a story and came across the word "conscience." "What is that?", asked the innocent. The mother tried a simple answer: "It's something inside you that tells you when you have done something wrong." The boy reflected a few moments and said, "I never heard it, mother." "Well," added the mother, "it isn't exactly a sound that you hear. It's a feeling you have when you do something that you know you shouldn't do." He looked up at his mother, his eyes wide open in surprise. "I never felt it," he said. The mother was sure that sooner or later he would discover his conscience and the bedtime story was completed. A few days later the mother found the young hopeful rushing from his big brother's room

into his own and she sensed mischief. He must have disturbed or taken something. (Jim was a scientist at the moment and his room was filled with bottles and wires and signs reading "Poison" and "Don't touch!"—a tempting and mysterious array.) She followed her four-year-old and asked without any preliminaries, "Where did you put what you took from Jimmy's room?" The youngster, still of good cheer, replied, "Let's hunt for it!" "No," said the mother, "this is not a game. Whatever you took, take it right back." The boy went straight to his pillow and drew from it a little box, went directly to the brother's gallery of wonders and replaced it. He must have felt disapproval but he said nothing at all to his mother in extenuation of his manifest dereliction. He said, instead, "I didn't hear it and I didn't feel it. Really, mother, I didn't." He had been experimenting with that mysterious conscience.

This illustrates, among other things, the modern child's opportunity to question authority without rebelling. Although the immediate result of his quest appeared to be negative, the mother had no misgivings as to the future. She was confident that the child would in time discover his conscience and be on speaking terms with it.

Reconciling Conflicts

Parents who have arrived at some philosophy of control are often disturbed by the fact that their purposes and ideals are being neutralized by the practices and attitudes of the playground or of the school. Sometimes the home appears to be in conflict with the school and with other forces acting upon the child. The teacher punishes a child for something that the home accepts or even approves. The neighbors, even grandma, may demand certain standards of conduct which mother does not. Here it is not necessary to insist that our way is the

only right one, nor yet to strive to wrap the child completely with our understanding and protection. We need not try to extend our influence to all his contacts with the outside world in an effort to make all of his experiences consistent as to pleasure and pain, as to approval and disapproval. It is from these varied situations and varying standards that the child learns to adjust himself to other ways and other people, to the many kinds of other people with whom he will have to live. These conflicts are themselves all parts of the educative process.

The parents' role is not to hold up a false ideal of perfection or consistency, but to interpret the inconsistencies to the child and explain their sources. The parent must help the child understand that amid the varied patterns, the goals of all the adults who try to influence him are, as a rule, the same. The child needs to feel that Father and Mother, Grandmother, Teacher and Scout-master are all concerned for his well-being and development—however different the methods they may use to arrive at this common purpose. A generous attitude toward others will be more helpful to the child than the complacent assumption that our ways are right and the ways of strangers are wrong or perverse. Even father and mother may disagree on procedures to be followed. Yet their goals may be the same. Unity does not necessarily mean agreeing. But it does mean striving with sincerity for common ends.

From his playmates and teachers and from casual contacts with all kinds and varieties of people the child learns essential lessons in human relationships and values. Such experiences combine with his home background to make the light and shade against which he must eventually clarify his own criteria of worth and of conduct.

It is not from authoritative didactic teachings, not from our "do's" and "don'ts", nor from any fine balancing of rewards and punishments, that our discipline

derives its effectiveness. Rather is it from our day-by-day living with our children, from the way we share with them our experiences and our thinking, our pleasures and our hopes, even some of our disappointments, as they grow old enough to see in longer perspective. How we arrive at certain decisions, how we balance values in meeting situations and making choices—these will be more effective guides to our children than any preachment or any precept.

II

ALL CHILDREN DIFFER

There is an old legend about a Persian Prince who was being entertained by royalty in England. The master of ceremonies announced to His Majesty one morning that the program for the day was a visit to Ascot. "And what is an Ascot?" The attendant explained the great horse racing meet. The prince said, "We do not wish to see an Ascot." The master of ceremonies pointed out how important it was for His Majesty to take part in this great event. Everybody, including his royal hosts, would be there. It was the expected, the proper thing. Courtesy demanded it. His Royal Highness was unmoved. "We shall not go to an Ascot: in our country it has long been known that some horses can run faster than others."

If we had studied our children as closely as the Persians studied their horses, we should, perhaps, have found out by now that some children can run faster than others. There must be many among us who do not know this, for again and again we treat children as if each one could excel all the others, provided he would only try hard enough.

The running of races symbolizes our attitudes and practices in many situations. We may profitably consider the parallel because it allows us to see clearly what is involved in the usual rivalries among children—and among adults.

The Virtues of the Race Track

What happens to a child when he is matched to run against another who is greatly superior? Several things may happen. The handicapped child may be stimulated to exert himself to the utmost. That is, of course, what we expect; that is our justification for setting up the challenge and the rivalry. But the child may exert himself beyond his healthy endurance, and suffer serious physical injury. He may struggle through the race doggedly and, baffled and perplexed by the desperate futility of his efforts, carry away a lasting sense of inferiority and shyness. He may early discover the futility of trying against such odds and then turn around to belittle the race as of no consequence: "Who cares about running?" This last is the typical "sour grapes" attitude. Probably most of us have developed it with respect to many of the things that we have tried to do and that we have found ourselves unable to do satisfactorily.

Some rivalries seem to come almost unavoidably from the everyday meeting of two or more individuals. Other rivalries and contests and competitions are deliberately planned and stimulated, particularly among children. Often these are fostered by an older person who calls attention to what some other children are doing, or achieving. "How beautifully Tommy swims. How well Nancy does in school." And the other, if he cannot come up to the praised model, feels challenged to do something effective, either to belittle the model or to attract attention to himself. The virtues that we ascribe to such competition have their counterbalancing defects and disadvantages.

The Individual in the Family

Within the family, which is traditionally concerned with helping each individual to that which he needs for his own fulfillment, it is essential to recognize the im-

portance of individual differences. In the shelter of the family the young child may escape for several years the sense of the invidious. Everybody is kind, affection controls conduct, all possible wishes are gratified, attention from others is subject to call. As the child grows older and experiences the changes which inevitably attend the advent of new arrivals in the family group, and especially as he begins to play with other children of his own age, his ego soon becomes conscious of slights and bruises of varying degrees of painfulness. Before long self-doubt and insecurity, with their concomitant self-assertiveness and arrogance, come home to trouble him—in many cases, for the rest of his life.

We have to accept such conflict as a universal condition of human life and growth. We are keenly aware of this competition, on the athletic field, in the classroom, or in the market place. But the home is pre-eminently the place where such inevitable variations are accepted as in the nature of things and adjusted with kindness and the patience born of affection. Here each individual has a real chance to develop the best that is within him.

Heredity and Environment

If we study our children—again as the Persians studied their horses—we will know that no two of them are alike. In an ordinary family of three or four children, the differences are commonly so striking that we never cease marveling. A certain boy is so much taller—or shorter—than the others. One of the girls is so much livelier, or brighter, or more patient or more stubborn. We are rather perplexed and find it hard to account for these physical, intellectual and temperamental differences. They have the same parents, we argue to ourselves, and therefore the same heredity, the same home—and therefore the same environment. Why are they so different?

In the first place, having the same parents does not mean having the same heredity. The inheritance of a child, in the biological sense, is derived from the ancestral stream of life, through the parents. Millions of potential characters run in a family, but only a comparatively small number appear in a given individual, and each individual is a unique combination. This combination represents for each individual, as Professor Herbert S. Jennings of Johns Hopkins University has so well said, "a new deal if not always a square deal".

In the second place, the same home does not mean the same environment for each child. If there are two children one has an older brother or sister, while the other has a younger one; or, one has only a brother and the other has only a sister. One man, speaking of his own childhood and its remembered experiences, says: "I was a middle child and as a result I was always in the position of being either a 'sissy' or a 'bully'. When I hit my younger brother I was a bully—when I gave in to the aggressiveness of my older brother I was a sissy. These labels affected all my relations with other children." Again, as each child grows, he develops his own group of associates and friends, who become parts of his environment. Each child, by himself and with his associates, modifies the environment of the other child. In the same home, amidst the same furniture and parents, along the same streets and in the same school, the environment is not only in constant change, but it changes in different ways and at different rates for each child. Thus the environment is different for each individual.

The Quintuplets

We see this strikingly demonstrated in the most dramatic group of siblings of which we have any record, the Dionne quintuplets. The extremely high probability

that the quintuplets are identical "quins"—that is, have exactly the same inheritance—makes their later development of unusual interest to parents and educators. It was necessary to keep these children together because that was, in the beginning, the only way to save their lives and insure their growth. And it was necessary to treat them all alike because each had to be treated in the best way Dr. Dafoe and his assistants knew. What has been the effect of this uniform regimen?

One result of this experience has been to show that there are differences among the quintuplets, as well as striking similarities. The teachers and nurses, who spend so much time watching the quintuplets, are often unable to tell you which is which from the appearance. But when you watch them at play, you soon learn to recognize differences in disposition. You might expect Marie, the smallest, to be a tagalong most of the time. But, no, the children usually pair off in their activities—except Emilie who appears to be the most self-sufficient, or perhaps the most timid. When the psychologists tried to analyze the conduct of the Quins over a period of years, they found differences that were remarkably consistent.

The physical differences in outward details are very slight but they are there, and there is every reason to believe that there are also slight but consistent variations in the details of their nervous systems, their muscles, their glands, and other inner tissues and organs. Because of such slight variations, we should expect slight differences in sensitiveness and responsiveness—and it is probably out of such slight differences that the children's experiences have gradually brought about more and more divergence.

Even if we assumed that there was no innate difference whatever among the five girls, in their dispositions or in their "social" capacities, we would still have to recognize

the role of the environment in shaping their development.

The presence of others—the other sisters even—arouses both action and response. Accordingly, alterations in attitudes and conduct, as related to other persons, begin very early, and this process is different for each one, in spite of every effort to maintain uniform conditions for reasons of health, or convenience, or even for scientific studies.

We have to accept, then, not only individual differences in capacity, but also individual variation in responsiveness or adaptability. Two children may be equally exposed to the same lessons, exhortations and preachments, to the same threats and promises, rewards and punishments, the same sequence and duration and intensity of drills and exercises. Yet they remain quite unlike one another. They may even have been made more different by the very process. What is meat for one may be literally poison for the other.

Average and Normal

Scientific studies of the development of children have yielded enormously valuable information in recent years. Much of this can be conveniently summarized only in condensed mathematical terms—averages, curves of growth, or frequency distributions, for example. Such information is valuable primarily to the specialist, who depends upon it as a *norm,* or basis for comparison. There is danger, however, in its use as an absolute measure, as if, for example, the average were always also the *normal,* and departure from the average, something abnormal.

There are neat tabulations to tell you how much a child "ought" to weigh at a given height and age. It is good common sense, however, to recognize that a lanky boy of thirteen years who is sixty-two inches tall normally weighs less than a stocky boy of the same height and age.

Certainly there is no cause for alarm because a given individual departs from the *norm*—which here means merely an arithmetical average of large numbers.

We have all seen the man who lets his chest expand two additional inches because his baby walks a few weeks earlier than the average. We have seen also the man who allows his shoulders to droop two inches because his baby is a few weeks behind the mysterious average. We may smile indulgently at the pride in the first case, for we know the parent cannot influence the result; but we cannot overlook the problem in the second case, which is to know at precisely what point a retardation in development is serious. Once in so often a lanky child is just too lank—or a plump child just too fat. Or a non-walking child definitely retarded.

With regard to all physical characteristics, our measurements have revealed not only the average, but a perfectly normal spread.

Parents need, in any case, to guard against worrying or reproaching themselves if the child is delayed in one or several achievements, as compared to the recorded average or as compared to the neighbor's child. But how can we tell whether a child's slowness or smallness or other deviation is worth looking into? If we are in doubt, there is naturally some anxiety. It is well in such cases to consult a specialist in the field in order to find out whether the situation is serious and what can be done about it.

Upon What Meat

The older of two boys was painfully aware of some of the differences that distinguish one child from another. He was so much slighter, so much less robust, so much more easily fatigued than his brother. He had discovered too, the disadvantages to him of these differences. One

day he asked his mother, "What did you feed Bob that made him so much stronger?"

The answer to that question might well be of value to all of us. It would be desirable to know how to make every child robust and energetic and untiring. Indeed, the experts in nutrition have already accomplished a substantial and far-reaching service in this direction by improving the feeding habits of the population. They have told us what the needs of the average boy or girl are at each age level. There is no doubt that our feeding habits have been improved and that the total amount of malnutrition due to ignorance has been reduced.

Our children are today actually healthier, on the average, than were children a generation ago. They have grown, on the average, more inches for each year of life; and they weigh, on the average, more pounds per inch of growth than their parents did. That is true not only in this country but in every country that has been influenced by modern science. It is true in part because we have learned certain important principles regarding the nutrition of growing children, in part because we have been able to supply the necessary food in sufficient quantities, and in part also, because we have encouraged and created opportunities for out-door exercise.

With all these gains, however, there are thousands of children who simply cannot tolerate the "average diet". So long as many children were undernourished, there was some justification for the slogan, "A quart of milk a day for every child!" Today, no experienced person would claim that every child should get precisely one quart, no more and no less. And we know that there are some children with whom milk does not agree. Although the *average* rule applied to the *average* population may yield valuable results, we have learned to adapt our feeding rules to the special needs of each individual child.

Similarly we have a great deal of reliable information on the average amount of sleep that is required for children of four, or seven, or ten, years of age. But we have also information—indeed, the same set of facts—to show us that there is a great deal of individual variation. It is unfair to insist that a particular child lie still and chafe when he can thrive on less sleep than the average.

We have all seen certain children of the type which Dr. C. Anderson Aldrich so aptly describes as "resistant reactors" in the book *Babies Are Human Beings*. Children of this type are recognizable from early childhood and parents must adapt their early training and their discipline to the special needs of these children, not following "rules", but searching for the best ways for *them*. Dr. Aldrich declares that "politic and individual methods are worth more than years of training in the programs of such children."

The Intelligence

When we come to the "mental" characteristics of children, we find again a great difference between the quickest and the slowest. Our attempts to measure "intelligence" have shown wide ranges that can be conveniently represented by numbers. The widely discussed "Intelligence Quotient" is a figure representing the ratio of an individual's age to his score on a special achievement or performance scale. For example, if a child of seven scores at the eight-year level on the scale, his "I.Q." would be 114, that is, 114 per cent of the intelligence supposed to be "normal" for his age. If a seven-year-old child scores only at the six-year level of the test, his "I.Q." is below one hundred, or about 85.

As to the exact nature of the qualities which intelligence tests measure there is considerable difference of opinion. Writing in *Child Study,* Dr. George D. Stod-

dard said: "It is hard to get much agreement on what mental tests measure. Some say they measure what they *do* measure, and that is all there is to it. They may be considered the agnostics among mental testers. At the other extreme are those who state that they measure an inborn, ineradicable capacity to mature along a fixed continuum of mental growth for such time as has been previously determined in the organism, at a rate unaffected by external conditions, and toward a maximum which is on the knees of the gods. Most of us fall somewhere in between these two extremes."

During the past few years there has been much experimentation on this subject, tending to cast doubt on the earlier concept of the intelligence quotient as fixed and unchangeable. There is a tendency to credit the interaction of heredity and environment with having an effect upon mental development and to allow for the effects of training upon measurable intelligence.

Despite these unanswered questions, however, intelligence testing is a valuable instrument and should be properly used as such. For just as a thermometer measures temperature, but does not diagnose disease, so the intelligence test serves as an indicator or guide, but does not prescribe ways of meeting any child's needs.

For this we must be guided by many other factors as well. Beyond the quantitative differences in "intelligence" which are measurable by these tests, children show *qualitative* mental differences; children who register the same "intelligence quotient" may differ in many ways.

Of two brothers who had about the same "intelligence quotient", a friend at college said, "If you gave Harry a new car, he would have something out of order on it inside an hour; and if you gave Bob an old wreck, he would make it go inside an hour." This expresses a difference that is not measured by our usual intelligence tests,

and it is probably a real difference. We are now developing fairly reliable tests for these and other special aptitudes.

Variation in Interests

People, including children, respond differently to the stimuli which they receive from their surroundings. They often show, by variations in their interests, what are probably constitutional or inherited differences. These, for the present at least, we are unable to measure. For example, some children are decidedly more interested in collecting things than in handling, manipulating, or making things. Some are more interested in people, some in words, or in abstract ideas.

A mother speaking of the way her four children took to the family garden said: "John and Jane are very much interested in the processes—planting, digging, cultivating and so on—Peter and Peggy care only about the results; they want the flowers to cut or the effect of the whole." We could all make similar contrasts among our children. Most of us still have to learn, however, to make such contrasts without using a tone of voice which implies that either John and Jane or Peter and Peggy are in some way superior to the others. All we know is that they are different.

Other constitutional differences show themselves in certain special abilities or disabilities, such as in music or mathematics. Those native abilities are of course subject to cultivation, so that the child may grow in skill and mastery. On the other hand, no amount of teaching or training or practicing will avail where the special capacities are lacking. Under favorable circumstances it has been found possible for each child to develop a great variety of skills, to acquire a variety of information, without being measured, or measuring himself, by the

achievement of others. Each goes his own pace, each does what seems to him worth doing, makes his place for himself as a personality, without envy, without malice, without pride.

One child in an elementary school had found difficulty in learning to read and seemed to be acquiring a deep sense of inferiority. He was withdrawing himself from his group; he had difficulties on the playground; the other children bullied him. Through the cooperation of the mother and teacher, he was made to feel that some of the other things he was doing were sufficiently important to receive notice. He had made a toy house large enough to crawl into; here he could be the host to other children. The parents took the trouble to move the house to the country for the summer. Now his status and self-respect were materially raised: he had something to show for his efforts; he could get attention without doing exactly what others did, but without making a nuisance of himself; he could get approval and was not obliged to affect contempt for the children who could read.

What is Equality?

Our usual emphasis upon "equality" is inherently unsound and inconsistent. On the one hand we affect to believe that everybody can do what anybody has done. We say to the children, "If you only try hard enough, you too can score a bull's-eye, you too can pass in German or Latin, you too can master the violin or tennis." On the other hand, we pretend that nothing is worth doing unless you do it "the best". We say to the children, "If you try hard enough, you can be at the head of the class, you can come out first in the race, you can swim the farthest, or figure the fastest." We know in our hearts that we cannot have it both ways, for if we are all "equal" there is no point in these races and rivalries—and if we are *not*

all equal—then there is no point in the races or rivalries either—except to find out the important differences.

It is easy enough to take individual differences into account when we see the differences clearly and understand their meaning. Nobody is satisfied, for example, to buy for his own *particular* child a pair of shoes made to fit the *average* child of his age. We know that feet vary and that shoes have to be worn by *particular* feet, not by *average* feet.

In contrast, consider the difficulty we have in making our education fit the individual. We know that schooling produces effects, that it modifies children, for the most part favorably. And yet we are unable to say that every child gains from the schooling he receives. In addition to the tremendous benefits that have come from our attempts to universalize education, there has been also much heart-break and much injustice.

Equal Opportunity

This is not to say that we should restrict the educational opportunities, as in the past, to the children of the favored few. It is merely to raise questions. Can a uniform educational effort possibly be suited to so many different kinds of children? Can we adapt our schooling more closely to the actual children we have, instead of trying to make everybody carry off an education designed for the average child? If an educational misfit could produce obvious corns and bunions as does a shoemaker's misfit, perhaps we should more quickly take notice. We have to ask ourselves, "Is it the child who is a misfit, or is it the pattern we are trying to make him wear?"

The injustice of a uniform school program, a uniform school method, a uniform school standard, has two aspects. It imposes unfair burdens, and it deprives of positive values.

We can see this when we observe parents and teachers intent upon stimulating children to greater effort by making appeals to rivalry and envy. "Look at Jane, six months younger than you—and she writes so beautifully!" Or, "Why isn't your arithmetic like Caroline's?" The child ponders but he cannot make it out. Inside, however, something tells him that the comparison is not fair. You might as well ask him, "Why isn't your hair as black as Sam's or as curly as Susan's?"

More injustice appears when we consider the time wasted in children's efforts that are foredoomed to failure. Every child could employ his time to better purpose than in trying to do the impossible. In some cases it is practically impossible for a child to learn a foreign language. In other cases the impossible is in the form of higher mathematics. Many of us adults long ago gave up all ambition to master dancing, or bridge, or Beethoven's music. We can find uses for our time more satisfying for us. So far as the individual child is concerned, much of what we demand of him is a sheer waste of time that he could put to more profitable use.

The One and the Many

We know that all boys are more or less interested in athletics and should have a chance to play with other boys and find out whether they enjoy it. But it is not necessary that every boy be equally good at and equally absorbed in organized games. For the occasional children who just can't, we must find the more individualized social and athletic outlets such as tennis, swimming, skating.

How difficult it is for a certain type of child to fit into a group is illustrated by the story of an eight-year-old boy who found his principal enjoyment in reading, chemical experiments, and puppets—all individualistic interests.

His parents felt that he ought to join a play group. After the first day he came back with the statement that he was never going to go to group again because the boys laughed at him. The mother tried to explain to him that he must have done something to make them laugh, that boys just don't stop and laugh at someone without any reason. To this the child replied, "Really, I didn't do anything. We were playing ball and I just had this little book in my pocket and I read between turns." The mother was surprised that the boys had not murdered him!

This is, of course, not to be interpreted as a counsel of drift, or of following the path of least resistance. The child needs constantly to be challenged and encouraged to exert himself to new ventures upon the sea of uncharted experiences.

Increasingly schools are giving consideration to the needs of the individual child, although from the nature of the case they have been designed to deal with the average child. It still remains for the parents, through their attitude toward the various kinds of school achievement, to guide and interpret the child's experience for his own best development.

Individual Capacities

How can we discover the native capacities to cultivate? It is not suggested that each child has special talents that are of artistic or commercial importance. We have only to begin with the assumption that each child is unique and with the conviction that each individual must be helped to live his own life. We need not search for hidden genius, for that will usually take care of itself. We need only keep the paths open for the child, and keep our minds open as well.

Each child must be given a fair chance to try out a sufficiently wide range of activities to insure him the dis-

covery of what is worth while for him. I can never know that I am a good swimmer or runner, or painter, or speller, unless I find out; and I can find out only by trying. If I try a hundred arts and stunts and tricks, I shall find that I can do nothing distinctive with nearly all of them. But do not let me become downhearted, for the same thing is true of the next individual, and the next. Nobody can do everything.

I shall find also that I can do passing well at this and that—only a few things, no doubt, but those few things can be made mine, and for that reason precious to me, more important in my eyes than the arts and performances of others. And the same is true of each of the other individuals. Nobody can fail in everything. I need not belittle what others are doing in order to gain satisfaction in my own doing; neither must the difference between us belittle me, destroy my self-regard, discourage my further striving.

Each According to His Needs

The only equality that children can claim is the equal right to be treated in accordance with their needs. The recognition of difference imposes a new responsibility—that of treating children with discrimination.

If the parents are quite sure of their reasons for making discriminations, the children will usually fall in with the conditions they find. Many a child will, of course, demand what he sees others have. He may ask, "Why don't you let me go to the movies; you let Carl go?" Whatever the reasons are, however, they must be related to the actual conditions and needs. To let one child go, for example, for the purpose of belittling the other is, of course, unsound. But children will accept discriminations if they are obviously fair, especially if there are compensations of one kind or another. It is not necessary

for all the children to have the same size of skates or dolls; but how about letting one have a larger piece of cake? Children can learn in the home that fairness consists not in treating all exactly alike, but in treating all with discrimination, with considerateness for each one's needs.

Experience has proved that there is a single fundamental attitude at the basis of all happy and constructive family experience. This is the requirement that parents accept their children and themselves, not in lip service or for the sake of duty, but in the deeper reality of their own inner selves. Given this acceptance, we can help and guide our children, no matter how they may differ in kind or degree, to an appreciation of each other rather than to rivalry for things or in accomplishments.

In this most hazardous business of living we must, perforce, leave a great deal to chance but we do not have to leave everything to fate. It is true that in the world of living things—specifically in our children—inherited capacities set definite limits to the scope and effectiveness of our efforts to mold development. We need not, however, abandon either hope or responsibility on this account. We are producing results despite our fears and ineptitudes. We can improve upon the past. It is obviously impossible to achieve all that we may desire or even all that science shows to be inherently potential. There are, nevertheless, enough practicable results within our reach to keep us well occupied. We must take the child and the world as we find them, not as desire would have them; but we must also realize that both the child and the world are subject to change, in the direction of which we parents also have a share.

III

WHAT ABOUT THE "CARDINAL VIRTUES"?

There are moments when all of us long for the calm and relative simplicity of the good old days, yet most of us are glad on the whole to accept the opportunities, the interest, the excitement and the fun that accompany living in our time. One thing that we do sincerely envy our not so remote ancestors, however, is the certainty they had of what is right and what is wrong. But hard as we often find it to reconcile present conditions with what we feel to be the best of our own traditions, we can see how much harder it is for those parents who cling to unquestioned convictions while the stream of life moves past them. The traditional scheme of values and virtues is often too rigid to meet the shock and strain of a generation whose ways of thinking are in constant flux. Such parents often appear to be unable to distinguish the vagaries of passing conventional modes from the rights and wrongs of fundamental human relations. A white lie to them is just as vital an issue as grand larceny, and violating traffic rules is considered a less serious offense than smoking cigarettes.

But there are certain traditional values on which all of us agree, certain cardinal virtues which we all hope to foster in our children. Like the parents of earlier generations we are all concerned with honor, loyalty, fidelity, truthfulness, about which we have very strong convic-

tions. Honesty, for example, is important in every kind of culture. Truthfulness is just as important on the frontier as it is in a business city. Responsibility is indispensable, if people are going to live together in families and in communities. How then are such virtues developed?

First, Thou Shalt Not

As in our early concern with health, our plans for making children good usually start with an attack upon evil. Every infant is given the opportunity to learn "don't" almost before he feels himself urged to "do". We had to learn how to prevent infections and aches and rickets before we could develop a positive program for healthful living. And so with preventing "bad habits" and faulty conduct—we pass through a period of restraints and penalties before we find a way of life that suits our needs.

We have a nice parallel in our modern attitude toward children's diseases. Parents have been learning that in their early stages many of these diseases closely resemble the symptoms of the "common cold". It is no longer considered good sense, therefore, to shrug one's shoulders and say, "Oh, it is only a cold!" Even though most colds never turn out to be anything worse, they may indicate the onset of something more serious. It is not necessary to go into a panic over every sniffle; it is necessary to be aware of the possibilities.

It is in much the same way that we have to look upon the blunderings and bunglings of our children in the course of their growing up. The faults and misconduct may be normal manifestations of growth—of a child in the process of learning—or they may be symptoms of unsound attitudes or inadequate adjustments. They are always worth watching, but not in fear. We parents have to learn to sense the difference between the merely transient manifestations and those that indicate a deeper

problem. It is here that the knowledge of experts and the experience of others like ourselves can help us.

Truthfulness

Until about twenty-five years ago, every individual parent came across the phenomenon of the lying child in the privacy of his home. He felt it his duty to defend the family name, to keep the disgrace a secret and to cure the afflicted child as best he could. Through group discussion of childhood problems in every part of the country, and through the testimony of thousands of frank but troubled parents, we have come to learn that lying in little children is the rule rather than the exception.

Normal or not, lying is still undesirable and we are to establish truthfulness as early in the game as possible. We seek in various ways to establish this virtue in the child's soul; it seems so logical to us that by teaching, and preaching, we should be able to make the child truthful. Since learning of any kind, we assume, is in the nature of habit formation, the child must be made to acquire truthfulness as early as he acquires other "good habits". In our efforts to establish desirable "habits of truth telling" we resort to reproof and instruction at the earliest age.

We think that coming down hard on falsehood is necessary. We decide to make the punishment swift and severe so the lesson will sink in or to repeat the lesson again and again and again, so that the child will remember.

Without attempting to generalize about the meaning or value of truth in the abstract, we must recognize, on behalf of the child, that it will take him a long time to learn to recognize truth and even longer to learn to appreciate it. The young child must first acquire sufficient skill in perception and discrimination to distinguish fact and fancy and to express himself with some degree of accuracy. It takes time to learn to distinguish colors and

forms, to count and to estimate. Inaccuracies, awkwardness, mistakes are to be expected. At this stage, as a rule, parents are sufficiently understanding to correct the child without emotion, without reproaches: it was only a few minutes, not an hour; there were two cars, not a "whole lot"; I should call that purple, not red. Certainly these are not problems of truth and falsehood, and nothing can be gained by making the erring child feel the weight of adult disapproval.

Somewhat more difficult for most parents is the stage during which the young child recalls with equal vividness what he actually experienced and what he dreamed, what he invented while fully awake, perhaps what he merely wished. The little boy of three who tells you solemnly that he went up in an airplane, when you know very well that he never came within touching distance of one, may be saying something that is not "true". But he is not "lying" for he is recounting merely what he remembers—having imagined. As part of the historical past, this remembrance has for him about the same quality as the remembrance of actually having gone out in the family car. Certainly the need in such cases is not for a lecture on truthfulness, but for time to learn to discriminate between what happened and what might have happened, or what was dreamed or wished. This development usually takes care of itself by the time the child is six or seven and nothing has to be done about it by the parents. It is only confusing to bring in our ideas of truth before the child is properly oriented.

Striving to Please

With the little child reality and fantasy are so mixed in consciousness and subconsciousness that he cannot tell the difference. He aims to please, and if what he says seems to please, whether truthful or not, he is likely to push it on

that basis. Here we need make no issue of being truthful or dishonest. The child needs to learn what is approved or acceptable, but first of all he needs to learn to discriminate between what we consider "real" and what is only imagined. A mother who had moved her family to the country was unpacking her medical supplies when she was called to the telephone. Coming back, she found her four-year-old son with an open bottle of bichloride of mercury tablets.

Trying to be calm and matter-of-fact, she asked, "Did you take one?"

"Yes", was his prompt reply—probably because he had heard that medicine was good for you. But when he saw how horrified she was, he said, "No, I didn't." By that time he really did not know whether he had or not. Evidently he had not, for he is still alive, but the confusion in his mind was obvious. His answers to the question were determined more by what he felt would please his mother than by his actual performances. In the same way teachers of older children are often baffled by the foolish answers they get from individuals who "really know better", until they discover that these children are responding, not to the literal meaning of the questions, but to the tone of voice or the facial expression of the questioner.

We cannot treat honesty and truthfulness like habits acquired through finger exercises on the violin, or like standardized practice in long division. We cannot foster basic social attitudes and spiritual values by the methods we use for the management of routines. From a practical point of view, we shall find that we are not saving time by making drastic demands upon the young child for conduct of which he cannot yet have the slightest conception. At best, we can hope by this method to teach the child to keep his thoughts to himself and to seek out ways of avoiding censure or punishment.

Lying, first unknowingly, then playfully, and then telling an occasional lie with a purpose, are stages that most children pass through on the way toward becoming truthful people. Individuals vary so in their rates of development, however, that a certain stage will be passed by some children earlier than by others, just as some children learn to walk at an earlier age. By the same token, it is those who learn to walk early who also stumble early.

These variations, nevertheless, are within only a few years and lies that we consider harmless or even amusing at four or five have altogether different meanings for the child of eight or nine or ten. It is only a very rare child who will think in the words of the glib little nine-year-old boy, "A lie is an abomination to the Lord but an ever ready help in time of trouble." At this stage children do realize, however, that lying is not an approved mode of behavior but that it can be very useful. The parent's task is to discover what it is that makes the child want to deceive others. What does he hope to gain? Does he fear punishment or disapproval? What does he want that he cannot get through more candid methods? Whatever the cause, the parent has to look upon the child as in the process of becoming truthful—a process by no means automatic, but demanding constant help in guidance and interpretation.

Boastful Lying

One seven-year-old girl came home announcing that she had won a prize and had skipped a class at school. Her parents, delighted with this news, were equally puzzled when they discovered that neither of these reports was true. A very gifted younger sister, who was much admired and applauded, was creating for this child the need to find her own means to win approval. Punish-

ments, threats, or even a calm "talking to" would be less than useless in resolving this situation, by no means an unusual one.

We find a similar example in a boy striving to fulfill his mother's fond hopes for a "perfect" child. This mother could not understand why her son, who was never punished at home for his shortcomings, should lie braggingly about his scholastic, athletic, and social achievements. It was only with much difficulty that she was brought to see the real cause. Because she had disappointed her own parents by her not-very-brilliant marriage, she was striving to make her child something for them to be proud of. And the child, goaded by his mother's expectations to attain impossible goals, felt compelled to lie in order to have and to give the illusion of success and perfection.

Frequent dishonesties or evasions in children always call for consideration but not necessarily for direct attack. Before we can possibly decide the question of treatment, it is necessary to ask, "What causes this type of behavior?" Parents, thinking in terms of molding the child's character "while he is young", turn in a panic to a search for punitive measures, devices, appeals, arguments, instead of regarding the child's fault as a symptom of a deeper maladjustment.

Lies as Symptoms

Even the harmless and seemingly purposeless imaginings of children may have widely differing meaning which call for different attitudes on our part. A little boy of four entertains his parents with his imaginative invention of locomotives and airplanes, of soldiers and sailors. He can convert himself at a moment's notice into a conductor, an engineer, a chauffeur. He can improvise a whole family of children and leave them blithely when he has no further use for them. This is the normal way in which chil-

dren recreate their environment and relive their own experiences in play. We are, however, concerned about the fanciful play of a six-year-old girl who has with her constantly an imaginary companion of her own creation. We are not troubled by the fact of an imaginary companion, but by the use which the child makes of her invention and we sense a real difference in this type of play. Whereas the one child is dramatizing his thoughts and feelings in play, the other is using these flights of fancy as a device for evading the demands of the real world. She is withdrawn, uncommunicative, unaffectionate, an unknown person to her parents, a timid child among other children. In the world which she invents she can always manage her imaginary companions who are more tractable than real children among whom she is thrown. It is her inability to adjust herself to the world's difficulties that is significant and that should become the focus of interest. There is a difference here both in the age of the children and in the quality of their fantasies. One is a cause for serious concern, the other a healthy, imaginative child.

Giving a Bad Name

It is in the tradition of training by means of unpleasant penalties to brand a child for his misdeeds. The child has spoken an untruth: he is dubbed a liar. He has taken what was another's and he is classified as a thief. We might assume that a disparaging label would discourage further misdeeds but we know from experience that it tends, rather, to discourage further effort. It is the old story of giving a dog a bad name and we see the disastrous outcomes in men and women who have given up caring.

To cure a child of his fault, we must help him outgrow his need for resorting to it, not identify him with

those who accept this as their way of life. A child may tell a lie, but he is not a liar; he may steal, but he is not a thief. While he is still a child, he is always in the process of becoming something better. While we point out to him the necessity for acquiring strength to face situations more acceptably, it is our faith in him that makes it possible for him to live through this painful process of "becoming."

Honesty

In very much the same way that a child becomes truthful in his use of words, he also learns gradually to be honest in his treatment of other people's property. In the process, however—as the testimony of a great many parents indicates—it is not at all unusual for a child to steal. Money in particular appears to be very tempting, partly because it is such a mobile product, partly because adults attach so much importance to it, and partly because it is almost "anonymous"—Mother's money looks just the same as the grocery man's or mine, but Sally's musical box is distinctly and definitely Sally's.

Continued stealing or stealing in order to make a splurge of some sort with one's fellows, is, like boastful lying, often the result of unhappy home conditions—a blind attempt to compensate for feelings of inferiority and failure. If we are to help the child who resorts to these means we must attack the problem at the source and seek a remedy for the feelings of inferiority rather than a "preventive" or "deterrent" for the misdeed itself.

Sometimes, too, children's thefts and lies are symbolic rather than direct and only special insight and training enable us to discover their true meaning. A child who takes a material object may really want something quite different—affection, or power, or popularity, for ex-

ample—for which the object taken has become a symbol or substitute. Again and again problems of this type, which parents first think of merely in terms of discipline, open up into problems of family readjustment. Often we find that several persons are involved and that the child's difficulties reach far beyond the acts or the objects that aroused the parents' concern.

Modes of Self-Assertion

A boy of ten discovered that the local five-and-ten-cent store was an attractive place and that it was easy to help himself to its treasures. As he lived in a good neighborhood, the store attendant who had detected his misdeeds took him to his home instead of to the juvenile court, lecturing him on the way upon the danger of being sent to prison and suggesting various inducements to righteousness. This child had no lack of anything at home and, strangely enough, the things he had most frequently taken were pencils—a commodity with which this home of a successful writer was well supplied. The child's difficulty lay in his relations to the other children in the family. He was the youngest, and as he had gradually ceased to be "cute", he had found himself steadily pushed from the center of the stage. He felt insecure and unhappy. His resort to pilfering as a means of feeling important led the adults to a closer scrutiny of his inner needs. Steps were taken to give him more opportunity to do things which would receive recognition and approval. His brothers and sisters cooperated by treating him less like a baby or a nuisance, more like a person in his own right. The child responded immediately. The pilfering ceased and the difference in his feeling about himself was noticeable in his entire behavior.

Another boy of about the same age, though well-behaved in most respects, was the subject of great con-

cern to his teacher. "Why in the world," she asked herself, "should such a nice boy invent elaborate plans for absence from school, extract money from his parents, on false pretenses, in order to distribute largess to his fellows, and indulge in similar deceits with no apparent end in view?" The suggestion that the boy might be unhappy, his teacher vehemently rejected. He came from an unusually fine, well-educated family and a luxurious home. His father, a graduate of a famous university, was a distinguished physician. One brother was at college and expected to study medicine, another was at a preparatory school with the same goal ahead. This ten-year-old, however, who was the child of a second marriage, was far less brilliant. Lacking the family ability he was nevertheless being groomed to the family tradition. Unable to compete on this level, he was forced to find some other way to shine, to distinguish himself. His inventions and elaborate deceptions were his means toward that end.

This was not a question of "character" so much as one of mental health. The boy needed to find a place for himself on his own merits, to feel that his parents accepted him for what he was and valued him for his own capacities. They, too, needed help to this end. Relieved from the pressure of impossible expectations and finding himself at last a member of the family on his own terms, this boy lost his need to brag and swagger and his difficulties disappeared.

Need for Adventure

A much less subtle need—the simple desire for adventure—lies behind many a child's delinquency. Children have been known to raid stores, for example, purely for the excitement of the exploit itself. There is something about the situation that tempts an imaginative and self-confident youngster to show that he can outwit the

doorman or other guard, if he is athirst for adventure. Dishonesty may spring from a great variety of causes. Its cure is not a question of repressing a thieving disposition, but of finding out what need in the child, or what lack in his life, is leading him into conflict with his environment, or with the persons in it.

Before the days of the new regimentation in Germany, extensive studies were made of children roaming at large in the cities. These yield some interesting observations on child behavior and motives. The observers found these boys and girls so fascinated by the department stores that they resorted to the most ingenious devices for getting inside, where they were not ordinarily allowed, and where they had no business. The great game, once they were in, was to see how far they could go in eluding the guards and violating the "rules"—riding the escalators and elevators, drinking at the fountains, using the toilet facilities, getting into corners that were *verboten.*

It was necessary for them to meet the challenge of the adults in this artificial jungle, just as it is necessary for other children in other settings to meet the challenge of a tree or a fence to climb, a fox to trap, a "no trespass" warning to violate, or a squirrel to hit with a stone. In collecting sales slips that customers had dropped, and even in collecting small wares not too closely guarded, there were apparently the same motives of adventure and prowess, of achievement and evading the enemy, rather than any "criminal" intent. Even the "stealing" represented skill and ingenuity in getting around the attendants and watchman rather than a deliberate misappropriation of other people's goods.

We must recognize that children have such needs, and we can learn from their acts whether or not their needs are being met. Instead of making more *verboten* signs

and increasing our vigilance or our punitive measures, we must make more provision for legitimate adventure.

In cities, especially, even the mildest adventures are fraught with risk and unpleasantness. A country boy can swipe an apple from an orchard, trying to escape detection but knowing that he can cope with the irate farmer if he is caught. In the city, taking an apple from a fruit stand becomes a matter for the police. Country boys can use up some of their excess energy by throwing balls and stones, while the same exuberance and the same activity in the city have often resulted in injury to passersby or in damage to property. In one case it's "boys will be boys," while in the other it's, "the number of juvenile delinquents has been increasingly alarming."

Character

Many of us deplore the fact that the young people of today are, as we say, "irresponsible". They do not know the discipline of work, the rigors of tasks to be done and family needs to be met. They are "soft". Surely this is not the fault of the children, many of whom would welcome a chance to feel that they are needed, that their contribution in work and effort is important. Because our households, and indeed our whole community life, is so mechanized and so organized, there is little room for real work or real responsibility for the younger members of the family. To simulate hardships and hurdles or to create work for them misses the point altogether.

There is the story of a distinguished citizen who, in addition to attaining distinction, had succeeded in providing his family with all the conveniences and luxuries that wealth could command. He even had the admiration of his own children, as well as the respect of the public. The children were, however, challenged by his strength of character, which he attributed to the hardships he had

overcome in his youth. He had had to sleep in a cold room and to break through the ice in a bucket of water to wash himself in the morning. He had had to get up before dawn to look after the horses and cattle. A single candle was all he had had to read by. Many and severe were the difficulties that had beset him in the early days and these, said he, accounted for his achievements and his character.

Two of the children were particularly impressed and decided to emulate the father. They turned off the steam in their richly furnished bedroom; they let water freeze in a bucket placed at the open window and used this icy water to wash with; they arose before any of the servants, while it was still dark, and studied their lessons by candle light, shivering in their pajamas. This experience was probably harmless, except for possible eyestrain, but we may feel confident that it did not insure the "character" which the children were admiring in Father.

Meeting Hardships

The hardships and hurdles of today are for the most part of a different variety. We recognize that our contemporaries with "strong characters" are those who have overcome physical disabilities or personality difficulties or some sudden change of fortune. In our children too, we strive for acceptance of and adjustment to their own physical, mental and financial limitations. These moral victories, though more impressive to adults, are too intangible for youngsters to appreciate fully. For them, however, even those from well-equipped homes, there would still be actual, physical, old-fashioned hardships to overcome, if we could but refrain from coddling. In hot weather most of us sympathize excessively with the little ones and act as though the heat were harder on them than on us, when actually the reverse is true. We never dream

of sending a boy or girl on an errand if the weather is wet or raw or cold. We let children fret and whine and complain and spoil our automobile or train rides because it is supposed to be such torture for those not yet in their teens to sit still for more than half an hour.

We recognize that character derives from living day by day with other people and working side by side with them for stakes that are real. In modern life the family provides less and less of such opportunities, but if we are resourceful we can cultivate those that remain and search out those we have overlooked. We must also see to it that the school and the community take over some of this function—the school through related and meaningful activities, the community through organized work and playgroups. For it is not through work alone, but through play also, that the rewards of effort are attained and that character is made. The loyalties of the group, the subordination of one's own interests to "the good of the team", the discipline of defeat as well as of success —all these have their values too, in the making of character.

Formation of Attitudes

When we are dealing with the more obvious incidents relating to what we call honesty, or dependability, we are consciously trying to build for "character". Less dramatic, but equally essential for the end results in personality, are the daily occurrences that lead toward considerateness for other people, kindness, cooperation, good sportsmanship, friendliness, the meeting of obligations and so on. We expect even a young child to acquire a variety of attitudes for or against some kinds of acts, procedures, relationships. It is these attitudes, acquired unconsciously in the early years, that lay down the outlines for later standards and ideals, the patterns by which

the child will guide his conduct when he is not controlled by the will of his parents or some other authority. And it is these standards and ideals, intangible and elusive as they are, that will distinguish the character of the individual.

In the long run it is the parents who establish standards and ideals. What we consider important, what we truly value, must emerge in our conduct, in our own dealings with people, in our casual comments, in our eloquent silences. It is often a shrug of the shoulder or a curl of the lip that indicates to the child our standards of right and wrong, what is really our ideal of honesty, where we do really stand in regard to marriage or in regard to tax evasion.

The extent to which we unconsciously determine standards and values in our children is strikingly revealed by the way in which parents and children exhibit the same prejudices. Many things, many ideas, many people become hateful in the eyes of children simply because parents manifest antagonism toward them. Like fear, these antagonisms are commonly due to ignorance, and like fear, too, they narrow the child's adventures and explorations and acquaintances. We teach hostility to foreigners, to strange complexions or languages, to novel ideas, to unfamiliar costumes, to strange religious sects or to the people who live on the other side of the railroad tracks. Thus we establish scales against which our children measure higher or lower, better or worse.

What influences our children is not what we *say* about such matters, but what we actually *feel* and *do*. No affectation of righteousness on our part will deceive children about the things we truly value. It is difficult, for example, to convince the child that honesty is of great moral import, if he hears his father boast of having "put something over", no matter how vigorously he may register

grief and amazement at the child's "lies". A mother was painfully shocked because her little girl had pilfered some pennies from a bureau drawer but there is no record of the girl's reflections when the mother conveniently "forgot" the child's age in order to save railroad fare. Since the child cannot help acquiring standards of honesty from his parents, he has a legitimate claim for some unequivocal guidance and example. The most telling influence lies in the manifestation, in his parents' daily lives, of what they themselves actually believe to be fundamental.

In spite of anything we can do, however, the child is exposed to a variety of influences that may act in opposition to our purposes. A former generation could see clearly the place of the home and of the church in training character and upholding standards of conduct. The modern child is influenced by the school and the playground and the movies, by the newspaper and the policeman and the radio. In school his companions probably exert more influence than the teacher and these companions represent perhaps a score or more of different kinds of homes. On the street he hears and sees standards and ideals that represent a wide range of cultural levels. And unless he is stupid, he must be taking note.

Parents as Interpreters

It is here that the parent plays the important role of interpreter, a role played by parents through the ages. We of today, however, are called upon to do what no previous generation felt so necessary—to maintain standards and ideals and yet to interpret without condemnation the standards of those with whom we disagree. It certainly was simpler for parents who could unequivocally condemn all those who disagreed with them. If we are to serve this generation, we are called upon for finer discrimination, a more delicate balancing of values, so that

we can interpret the countless divergencies with tolerance and yet condemn at times without fear of being old-fashioned.

Protection From Evil

We know that in time the children will have to face life, which is compounded of good and evil, of sorrows as well as of joys. Now, however, we say, let us spare them knowledge of shocking and horrible things, of crime, disease, sordidness, and all that is ugly and painful in human conduct and the world around them.

Yet can we protect them? Can we prevent even our seven-year-olds from coming into contact with what we know as "the seamy side of life"?

To begin with, we must accept the premise that children do not look at things as we do. It is well known that they will pass unscathed through experiences which would shatter an adult, because they simply have not had experiences through which to sense the horror and the evil present. We are often misled into thinking that children react to these things in the same way we do, when in fact they are only reacting to our reaction. Children are emotionally suggestible; they sense at once *our* horror; thereafter they feel horror for that which, without our suggestion, they would have regarded with a dispassionate interest.

An obvious instance of this is the child of the vegetarian who regards the butcher's shop with horror while the butcher's children—and his customer's children too—remain unmoved in the presence of sides of beef and sheep's heads hanging in rows. We see children who have vague unnamed fears of "tramps", beggars, inmates of a sanatorium, or even of the inhabitants of a poorer street. We do not, of course, know the origin of all the fears to which children are subject from time to time, though we

have all sorts of theories about them. But most of us have actually seen, as we have watched adults with children, how a fear of thunder, or of dogs, for example, can be imparted by adults to children. Adults also implant fear of death, which children do not normally think of as we do. They are commonly unmoved in the presence of death until they sense the attitudes or emotions of elders.

How Much Truth?

We must not expect the child to see the implications of certain evils from which we—as adults, with all our experience of what gives pain or sorrow in human living—shrink with the deepest distress. He cannot grasp the monstrousness of war, of starvation, of various forms of cruelty and oppression. All these things we must bear in mind when we consider to what extent we should protect our children, and how best we can enable them to face painful realities. The only rule that we can safely follow is that we should try to see with the eyes of the child.

But even so, there remains the question: How much truth can our children stand? We live in a world where kidnapping, divorce, economic insecurity and other painful realities are a part of daily life for many people, if not actually, at the moment, for ourselves. Shall we tell children about these grim realities which they see, or read, or hear about, even before they can possibly understand them? Will not such telling make them unduly fearful or timid, unwilling to face those risks of living to which everyone is exposed?

A mother and her twelve-year-old daughter were waiting for a bus on a street swept clean of everything, including pedestrians, by a heavy downpour of rain. A closed motor car came along and stopped before them. The driver opened the door and in a friendly voice invited the two to come out of the rain and be taken to

their destination. The mother thanked the stranger very politely but, to the child's disappointment, declined the invitation.

"Why didn't we go with that nice man, Mother?" asked the girl.

"The man looked like a nice man, and it was kind of him to offer to take us," the mother explained, "but we must not take rides with strangers."

Perhaps that was sufficient reason. Perhaps it satisfied the child for the time being. But it is not a sufficient "explanation" for it might set up in the child a permanent suspicion of all "strangers" or particularly of strangers with cars and winning smiles. But the mother did not intend just that. So she had to continue her explanation as they were riding along in the bus which finally came. It ran somewhat like this:

Most people are decent and honorable. Millions and millions of people are trustworthy. But, unfortunately (with regret in the voice as well as in the words) once in a great while a man who seemingly offers to do a kindness is really a dangerous person. It is altogether sad that you cannot accept every kind offer. Most people like to be helpful and we all hate to be rebuffed. But there are some people who must not be trusted. You cannot tell from the stranger's appearance, or from his manner, therefore you cannot take that chance. It's a shame because there are only a few such people compared to the many who are genuinely kind.

In the presence of dangers which the parent recognizes, the young child has to be completely shielded. But under cover of this protection the growing child has to learn to protect himself. It is a slow and gradual process. We parents will have to repeat our counsel many times, under many different circumstances, and in many different forms. We will have to set up warning signals without arousing

alarm. The child has to learn of the unpleasant facts and tragedies of life but he does not have to be filled with the parents' own anxieties and fears. These we will have to carry for him, balancing our protection with his growing independence, until he is able to manage for himself.

Continuity of Guidance

In shaping personality and character parents have one great advantage over all others who have to do with children. They continue to live with the child and can work slowly for changes in attitude. Whatever happens at any moment does not clinch an issue and settle it once and for all. Parents should, however, learn to use a variety of expert assistance which is becoming increasingly available in every community. Most families have already accepted the fact that many physical problems can be solved only with the aid of the physician or dentist; the next step is to accept, without hesitation and without apology, the assistance of child guidance clinics or consultation bureaus or other specialists in problems of behavior and mental health, and to foster the growth of such facilities in the community.

Parents should not make each episode into a life-and-death issue; but neither may we shrug our shoulders on the assumption that this will pass the way of all vanities. The parent must accept his responsibility; he is called upon to face each situation adequately, instead of running away from it, or instead of attempting to repress the child completely—which is perhaps another kind of running away.

We have to let the erring child know that we are aware of what he has done, but without making him feel that he has been damned for life. The child needs sympathy that assures him, not so much of forgiveness, as of understanding. It is not a question of condoning and overlook-

ing errors but of helping the child use them for his own growth. The parent's tact shows itself in overlooking some blunders, treating others casually and lightly, and using still others as stepping-stones for the child's own advance in self-understanding and self-control. We have to make the child feel, *not tell him,* that our efforts come from our affection and enduring confidence, not from our resentments or annoyance.

At the same time parents must learn that whatever happens, or whatever the child does or omits doing, has one meaning in the immediate present, but another meaning for them and for the child as part of a long process of maturing. They have to take a long view and to realize that it is the slow building up that counts. For this they have the time, the child, and the deepest concern.

IV

THE EARLY MONTHS AND EARLY YEARS

In China, before the intrusion of Western civilization, it was customary to date a child's birth from the time of conception. This is logical enough, for the date is intended to mark on the family calendar the beginning of a particular person's existence.

Those earliest months of life, which the individual passes in silence and in darkness, cannot be ignored if we mean to understand life as a whole. For during this period the child is exposed to important dynamic influences, as he is himself a dynamic factor in the lives of others.

Although this embryonic person is without sight or hearing, happenings outside his temporary abode act upon him and leave upon him their lasting marks. This does not mean, of course, that we attribute the child's birthmark to the fright his mother received during her pregnancy or his talent for drawing to her wanderings in the art gallery. It does mean, however, that almost from his conception lines of force connect mother and child and weave a pattern of relationships too subtle for the chemist to trace in the blood. Although out of sight, the child is never for long intervals out of mind; what happens in the minds and hearts of both parents is, in part, a factor in what happens to him.

For the parents the period of pregnancy is significant

since, from the first, it affects their attitudes toward parenthood and toward marriage, their continuing adjustment to one another as persons. This period gives them an opportunity to prepare for the time when "we" no longer stands for only two. They have to make the most of this time, not as if they were to receive the young stranger as an interloper, but as if they anticipated an expansion of the family as a gain to every member.

The First Baby

The first baby has always been, no doubt, a stirring emotional episode, for the father as well as the mother. Even when families were large, mothers and fathers considered the arrival of each gift from heaven as a very special occasion. In recent times, since there are fewer children in many families, they seem to be more precious, and parents are in danger of taking their tasks and responsibilities as parents all too anxiously. Important as a baby is, and desirable as it is to make use of the best knowledge and skill for his well-being, we have to begin by discouraging the disposition of many young parents to shape their whole lives on baby's necessary routine. We do not consider it a happy introduction to parenthood when a young father is persuaded by his well-meaning young wife that the few hours of the baby's life that are not spent in sleeping must be rigorously divided into periods for eating, for bathing, for airing, and for being "trained", leaving no time for Father.

Young parents who know something of the history behind our modern care of infants recognize that the stringent rules and regulations of yesterday were necessary. The real problem is to recognize at what point we may relax into the more comfortable and more efficient ways of today.

In the early years of the century, when tremendous

advances had been made through investigations in biological and nutritional laboratories, efforts were under way to put this newly gained knowledge at the disposal of parents. It was necessary then to simplify the theory, as well as to formulate simple directions for applying it. The immediate and tremendous success of Dr. L. Emmett Holt's famous book *The Care and Feeding of Children* rested largely on the simplicity and *directness* of the information it furnished; it took the form of the catechism, the traditional pattern for transmitting sound doctrine to learners.

Today we should not dare to answer identical questions from a thousand different mothers with a single set of instructions. Forty years ago, a concrete answer based on "averages" was in most cases better than blind groping or uncriticized custom. Dr. Holt's book had, in fact, a tremendous and far-reaching effect not alone upon a whole generation of mothers and the health of their infants, but upon the training of physicians and the development of pediatrics as an important medical specialty. As our knowledge grows, however, we have to restate the mother's questions, even in seemingly simple and universal matters of diet or sleep, and we have to qualify every answer in relation to a particular child.

Babies as Persons

In the time which has elapsed between the first appearance of Dr. Holt's catechism, in 1894, and the publication of Dr. and Mrs. C. Anderson Aldrich's *Babies Are Human Beings,* in 1939, we have not only enlarged our knowledge and refined our perceptions, but we have rediscovered the significance of each child's individuality and the need of treating the baby as a person from the start. We are no longer satisfied to apply average rules to the individual, who is to some degree different from

the average in most details. This view makes it impossible to give precise answers to most of the questions that parents ask, even about very young infants, for hardly any answer is suitable for all children. If you ask the universal question, "How much milk should the child have at a feeding?", the answer for any particular child cannot be taken from a table of "weight-for-age", even if the tailor-made answer turns out to be exactly what the table says.

We are able today to examine the stomachs of babies by means of the fluoroscope, and we are amazed at the great variations in size or capacity. If we ask, "How often should the child be fed?", we have the same kind of situation. We are amazed again to discover the great variations in the speed with which different babies digest a stomachful. There is no rigid feeding schedule which fits all children.

The interpretation of "considerate treatment" for the baby contained in *Babies Are Human Beings* is really a summing up of the best guidance parents can have during this early stage of their parenthood. "Considerate physical care is good mental hygiene in infancy. To give a baby all the warmth, comfort and cuddling that he seems to need; to meet his wishes in the matter of satisfying and appropriate food; to adjust our habit training to his individual rhythm; and to see that he has an opportunity to exercise each new accomplishment as it emerges; these are the beginnings of a forward looking program in mental hygiene." And as this wise book points out, "The degree to which we are considerate of our baby's early needs, however, may be the measure of his later ability to feel secure in a world of change and to adapt himself to the necessities of circumstance."

One of the greatest recommendations for this modern method of child care is that it is reassuringly personal.

Its main premise for "considerate treatment" is that every baby is a *speical* baby. "Feeling special", as one member of an integrated family, is an important ingredient of happiness and security for children. We parents aim therefore to give our children this from the very beginning.

Common Sense

We must not forget, incidentally, that there have always been mothers and nurses, and fathers too, who somehow managed, in their untutored ways, to perform happily and successfully in their care of a baby, even if in many other cases the same reliance upon "instinct" or "intuition" brought unfortunate results. They sensed the sensible and the right thing to do at each juncture, sometimes in defiance of custom or even of expert advice. They dealt with the child on the basis of a sympathetic but unformulated understanding of his needs. This was common sense.

Today we have large numbers of parents who, for various reasons, are unwilling to rely upon either their intuitions or the customs they observe about them. There are even some who have to learn anew to *enjoy* their children and to deal with them as human beings. Interestingly enough, the young mothers who have had the benefits of academic training seem most often in need of such re-orientation toward the child and of a fresh acceptance of the emotional relationship.

In part this need seems to arise from the acceptance of certain scientific principles without adequate discriminations as to their applications in the home. It is true that, for a period, the attempt to use science resulted—in many homes—in excluding from the child's life all manifestations of affection, all human qualities that might possibly influence behavior and development. The child was treated almost as an experimental animal or as a

potted plant, with specified rations of sunshine, air and food.

Although parents today are able to draw upon vastly enlarged resources, they are offered a bewildering choice of advice, all from equally "authoritative" sources, all equally reasonable. How can an inexperienced mother reconcile these various ideas with what she considers the major values? Very often a choice is made on the basis of personal preference, or on impulse. Two mothers read the same book. One learns from it that a child should be left very much to himself, never helped in his little difficulties: the other gathers from the same source that she must stand by all the time. It is no new discovery that scripture may be quoted to support diametrically opposite convictions. The parent not only needs to study the individual child, but to know herself—or himself—as well.

Schedules

The art of taking care of the baby involves establishing a routine so that the day flows along in a pattern. Meals and naps coming at approximately regular intervals are best for the baby's health and, besides this, they give him a feeling of security. From the infant's point of view, we must assume that it is comforting to know that you will never be allowed to get very hungry, or to remain wet for very long, that it is satisfying to be able to anticipate—only vaguely and wordlessly of course—the coming of bath time, of going-out time and of play time. The regular rhythm of the daily cycle is good for infants both physically and emotionally.

The schedule, however, is to be recognized as a guide, a *means* for making life simpler and more satisfying for both the mother and her child, rather than an *end* in itself. We may carry too far our respect for the established routine, both in the rigidity of our observance

and in the length of time for which we cling to each particular schedule. The home is not a railway station, in which the day is punctuated by arrivals and departures prompt to a second. Six o'clock bedtime was not ordained from above, and, if it is necessary—or more convenient—to make it come at seven, no sacred commandment is being violated. The main consideration is, of course, the welfare of the baby himself, which involves the affection and good spirits of the parents who constitute integral elements in his life. The best schedule is a poor schedule if it leaves them no time to enjoy each other or the child.

The ludicrous extremes to which people are sometimes led in these matters can be seen in the story of a professional woman who depended upon a trained infant's nurse to take care of her child. She was unable to arrange her own schedule so that she could be at home before six o'clock when the baby was put to bed for the night—and her husband found himself in the same predicament. The nurse had been so thoroughly "trained" that she considered it a violation of her professional honor to deviate from the sacred ritual: babies go to sleep at six. Being resourceful, however, she suggested that she might set the clock back an hour. And so everybody was happy, which, as we started to say, is important for the baby.

Flexible Rules

Parents are sometimes distressed if a visit from a grandmother or friend forces playtime to come at an hour that usually is quiet-time. They are glad enough to share with others the pleasure of seeing the baby and playing with him but they are impatient with visitors who do not take the routine seriously enough to plan their visits according to schedule. Occasional deviations of this kind appear to be not only harmless, but to have a positive value of their own. They give babies a chance to

become accustomed to new faces, to accept new experiences, to respond to a variety of stimuli, to retain their native adaptability. The schedule is, after all, supposed to be an aid. It is not designed to give mothers just one more rigid rule to follow or one more modern theory to worry about.

Losing sight of this concept (if, indeed, it was ever grasped at all) an over-conscientious mother will even miss the beginning of a play, on her rare visits to the theater, rather than feed her child fifteen or twenty minutes before the usual time. How irritating to any sensible husband—how utterly destructive of the holiday spirit which ought to mark such occasions! Or, regrettably, we still find a mother who keeps her husband away from the baby "because he has a gruff voice which might be frightening," or because he comes home five minutes after playtime is officially over. Not even the child's interests are served by such exclusive and partial concerns. We have to administer the home in terms of the needs and desires of all the members of the family.

Habits and Attitudes

In our eagerness to help the child adapt himself to the world, and perhaps to simplify our own problems, we often press him with our training and regulating. We shall be more helpful if we spend less time in training and take more time to enjoy his company day by day. What we want the child to attain and achieve comes very slowly —at a pace determined largely by his own growth from within. What we can do is to supply a sympathetic understanding of his desires and needs—and a reasonable regularity that, without oppressing him, makes him feel secure and comfortable and friendly. It is not, then, a set of "good habits" that we should seek to develop as quickly as possible, but an atmosphere of orderliness and

happiness. Of course, we cannot leave the child to his whims. We have to regulate his conduct, both in relation to the convenience of adults and in relation to his own health and well-being. But we have to guard against being so concerned as to make "habit training" a major end of our efforts rather than an incident of orderly living.

Tradition and folklore have from ancient times laid great stress on "habit training", as we see in old saws and catches: about having the child's first three, or five, years and being sure of all the rest; about not being able to teach old dogs new tricks; about good or bad habits persisting throughout life, and so on. The anxiety of young parents has been increased, in recent decades, by the teachings of academic writers who have raised the concern for habit training into a sign of intelligent and progressive parenthood. To add to the confusion, almost anything that we can distinguish as a virtue or a vice is labeled a "habit"—from thumbsucking and punctuality, to truthfulness or a liking for good music.

We know that there are many habits that do not persist for a lifetime, as some of the old theories would lead us to expect. A two-year-old habit would not in any case be very useful for very long; and the child normally sloughs off habits for which he has no further need as he grows older. We know from experience, as well as from research in adult education, that we *can* "teach an old dog new tricks"—if they happen to be tricks he really wants to learn.

The various virtues and desirable practices we seek to have our children attain are, of course, determined by the individual's experiences and adjustments; but they are not acquired as a result of forced drill. These desirable qualities—or their opposites, for that matter—are not to be assured by the perfunctory performance of correct acts under duress: they emerge out of integrated

purposes and sensitivities and inner needs, conditioned by the affections or hostilities experienced during growth.

Nor can we afford to neglect the factor of *growth* as determining the rate of the child's development. Things which the child becomes able to do are not altogether the results of "teaching" or "training". Many of them arise rather from those processes of development which are wholly or chiefly due to inborn factors, and which Professor Arnold Gesell calls *maturation.* The child learns —as we say—to pick up objects, for example, or to walk, not because he has been taught to do these things through practice, but because he has reached the stage at which his organs work together well enough to permit him to do them. From the point of view of "training" it should be apparent that it is wise to wait until the child is ready. Waiting is often a good way to save time.

"Training" the Baby

The practical working out of this point of view in the nursery is of the utmost importance for the child's well-being. Consider, for example, the question of bowel and bladder control. For years there has been a tendency to push the training back into the first few weeks of life. Although it is sometimes possible to get results, we have increasingly come to doubt the wisdom of beginning so early. We know now that it is not a case of "the sooner the better", but that the child's nervous system must actually mature to a certain point before control of these functions is possible. Recent observations show also that children trained too soon sometimes relapse and have to be retrained as much as two or three or more years later. There is some indication, furthermore, that the child thrives better from having a chance, during these early months, to feel the relief and satisfaction of carrying out the excretory process spontaneously, without sensing the

disapproval and reproach of mother or nurse for doing what is—at this stage—perfectly natural.

While it is often possible to train for early control, it does not appear worth the struggle, since the training is so much easier when the child is older, so much less of a strain for mother and baby alike. But when is the child "older"? That depends—children vary so much in the process of maturing. At about nine months some mothers do proceed experimentally, although results hardly seem worth the effort. A few children get the idea of what is expected of them. But such early success usually gives way to resistance at about a year, and does not return for several months. Studies indicate that toilet *learning* occurs more quickly, with less friction, when children are allowed to go untrained until they show an inclination to assume this responsibility. Actually, the physiological development of the nerve fibers involved occurs between the twelfth and the eighteenth month, and it is undesirable to attempt toilet control before. Bladder control usually comes several months after bowel control. Recent findings indicate that the untrained baby will learn to respond to his toilet needs about the same time as the trained one. Sometimes, however, a modern mother goes to extremes, and fails to recognize when the child is quite ready to be helped to go to the toilet. She should be prepared to offer her assistance and approval when the time comes. Most children come to have a desire for being comfortable and clean, which makes it easier for them to cooperate in this respect. But there responsibility cannot be placed upon the child—it has to remain with the mother while control is being achieved.

Make Haste Slowly

The parent's efforts to train the baby early are often the result of a more or less conscious rivalry among neighbors or friends. They use their infants to nourish their pride by striving for a record. It is unwise to expose the child to strains and humiliations without regard to his own individual needs and his own rate of development and it is dangerous to pit the mother's ambition or vanity against the child's personality, to start a conflict between parent and child that can only yield trouble later.

We must demand for ourselves, as parents, the satisfaction of merely living with our children and enjoying them. This joyous affection and appreciation is essential for the child's well-being, and it should not be sacrificed to the notion that it is necessary to start immediately making the baby learn what the world will expect of him in a year or in ten years. It is, of course, easier for the mother to look after the baby herself, to make sure that he is reasonably dry and clean, than to get the infant to cooperate and take over some of the responsibility. Both mother and child will be happier if the mother carries this responsibility for several months longer. Here at least the easier way appears to be both pleasanter and, for the long-time purpose, more suitable. We should not allow ourselves to let anybody shame us, or make us feel in any way culpable, if we take the easier way, and like it.

In many instances, psychiatrists in child guidance clinics have attributed later "bad habits" to the unhappy acquiring of "good habits" of control at too early an age. There are, for example, cases of constipation and of regression to bed-wetting and to soiling, that appear to result from reaction to the early pressures. There is some indication, too, that totally different manifestations, such as excessive fastidiousness or cleanliness, or certain forms

of stubbornness, may be due to similar early experiences, although this interpretation is largely speculative.

Breaking a Bad Habit

Many mothers worry a great deal about the "bad habit" of thumbsucking, which is very common in the first year or two. To exploit this worry, numerous enterprises offer preventatives or cures. Most children outgrow this "habit" before very long without any special help from their parents. Many parents, however, attack thumbsucking with the same zeal that they would use in a fight for civic virtue, fearing that, once started, it will persist indefinitely. The best thought at present interprets infantile thumbsucking as due to an intensification in some children of the common need among all infants to suck. It seems that infants who do not get all the sucking satisfaction they want in their regular feedings will supplement with the aid of the thumb. This view is supported by studies which show that there are fewer thumbsuckers among infants who are fed whenever they call for food, or at short intervals, than among those fed on modern three or four-hour schedules.

Parents commonly fear that thumbsucking will lead to malformation of the jaws, or displacement of the teeth. Such consequences are much rarer than was formally assumed. Investigation shows that similar maladjustments of teeth or jaws are present in a great many children who never sucked their thumbs and that thumbsucking probably never causes permanent distortion unless it persists until after the second teeth appear.

We have increasing proof that most of the devices used to restrain the child forcibly do more harm than good. Instead of using force, it has been found helpful to give the infant more time at the breast or bottle, until he has outgrown the need for this infantile satisfaction. Where

the need for sucking seems unusually intense, some pediatricians now advise substituting a "pacifier", which can be controlled to a degree, and also sterilized.

Such a large proportion of babies suck their thumbs during the first year that we can practically consider it normal. We have come to understand thumbsucking as a legitimate pleasurable gratification. The need is so deep that even a gentle interference arouses resentment. One can really disregard thumbsucking in the infant unless it is incessant and persistent. In that case it is best to treat it as a symptom and to look for possible sources of the child's discomfort or unhappiness.

If the practice of thumbsucking persists into the later years—the fourth or fifth, or even later—the question must be considered from the point of view of the child's emotional needs. Why does he need to retain this infantile form of satisfaction? Why has he failed to develop more mature interests and activities? What is keeping him back? It may be insecurity, a fear of other children, or of their rivalries—it may be some tension between the child and his parents, or some other member of the family. It is not, at all events, merely a question of "breaking a bad habit". This "habit" is a symptom of a problem beneath the surface, and no training or rewarding or punishing will solve it—even if we succeed in forcing the thumb permanently out of the mouth.

Eating

Knowing that children must eat to live and that diets should be well balanced, mothers sometimes seem to feel that they must try to force food into their children. All of us could learn a lot about the feeding of children from the findings of the Davis experiment in Chicago. Here little children chose what and how much they wished to eat from a variety of simple wholesome foods placed

before them without comment. In this carefully controlled situation, all had access to exactly the same assortment and the same arrangement of foods, but each child selected for his meals a unique combination. Although many of the children went off, at one time or another, on a veritable jag in some particular food, over a period of say a week, or a month, each one of them had consumed a well-balanced total, which compared very well with the "average" requirements for the age-group, as worked out by dieticians and investigators. All of the children remained well and progressed normally during the experiment. It apparently does no harm if a child sticks to orange-juice and takes very little of anything else for a time. It is not necessary to have, at any given meal, either a predetermined quantity of food or a completely balanced assortment. Or if the child prefers to do without his beets or his spinach, that is not an important matter. We need not be as obsessed as we have been by "the balanced meal". The balance can be achieved over a longer period.

We learned also from this experiment how important it is to let the child manifest his desires as being at least an indication of his needs. We have to repeat constantly that this does not mean leaving the child entirely to his impulses and desires; it means trying to find in his actions clues to his real needs, physical as well as emotional.

There is another lesson to be learned from this experiment. The nurses in charge of these children had to be trained to avoid all urgings, all inclinations to express approval or disapproval with respect to the child's choices —or his table manners. The complete relaxation, the quiet atmosphere, the complete absence of hurrying or pressing, the freedom of each child to take his own time, to eat in his own way, to take or leave as he liked, resulted in an atmosphere of contentment and friendliness, which

many parents would dearly love to have in their own nurseries. Such an atmosphere comes, of course, from a state of mind, rather than from any device or technique, and it is this state of mind that such experiments may help us to achieve.

Fickle Appetite

We are sometimes troubled when a child who normally eats very well turns away from some particular dish or seems to want very little food on some particular day. Intent upon the quantity or the balance of the meal, we attempt to force or to cajole the child into eating the rejected food. If the child has no appetite, let us be satisfied that he is for the moment better off without his food. From experimental studies and from the observation of children in many kinds of situations, it is clear that the child's appetite drops when he is not quite well or when he has been emotionally disturbed, or when there is even a slight infection. In one situation a whole group of infants suddenly lost their appetites at breakfast time: that was the first indication that anything was amiss. They were examined and found to have a "cold coming on". There was a slight increase in temperature, and later all had sniffles. The child's appetite may be a sensitive indicator of his more general condition. At any rate, attempting to force the child to eat against his will may have unfortunate consequences beyond the value of the immediate meal. Many feeding problems are suspected to come from such conflicts which generate unnecessary strain between the child and those to whom he looks for affection and protection and guidance.

Apparently the human infant, like many animals, "likes" or "dislikes" things with some relation to his needs. In our complex and largely artificial environment, we could hardly trust the infant to decide through his in-

stinctual preferences what we are to let him have; we know that it is comparatively easy to get infants—as well as animals—to eat with relish what is actually injurious to them. Yet we can learn from the child's conduct a great deal that will help us manage his diet, as well as his other needs. And aside from other considerations, we may well reflect that since one is going to eat food for the rest of his life, there is some point in getting enjoyment out of the practice.

By ignoring one small dislike, to keep it from becoming a hate, and by encouraging a dozen half-likes into enthusiasms, we can often help a child acquire a wholesome attitude toward food. Potatoes, for example, constitute a very considerable item in our dietary but they are not sufficiently important for any one child to be forced to consume them daily at the expense of spoiling his whole attitude toward eating anything and everything. Even when a child regularly eats less than he seems to need it is best not to attempt to force the issue. Forcing him to eat will help neither his appetite nor his digestion. More can be accomplished by planning his day so that he will be rested and calm at meal times, and by providing food that he likes, attractively served, with little comment on how much or how little he eats.

Discovering Powers

This matter of comment, whether expressed or silent, is important. We are all familiar with the spectacle of the child who, having discovered the parental anxiety with regard to his food intake, finds mealtime an excellent opportunity for focusing the coveted attention of all the adults of the household upon his own small self. Every meal becomes a battle, with the adults cajoling or threatening and the small child wielding the enormous power of passive resistance. Very often such a child, when he

lunches at a nursery school, attacks the food with enthusiasm, eating whatever is put before him. And the school is astonished to learn that at home he is a "feeding problem".

Sometimes the mealtime seems to be the only time when the child can be sure of his mother's undivided attention. He has learned how to dress himself almost without help, he comes and goes independently about the house, and his play is of such a nature that his mother can enter into it only half-heartedly, if at all. But his meals interest her enormously—particularly when he *doesn't* eat. I know of one family in which the mother is away from home all day but makes a tremendous effort to be at home for her little boy's supper-time. His nurse reports that at breakfast and lunch he eats with zest—and even with reasonable table manners—but most of his supper is spattered about on the table cloth or on the floor while his mother sits by his side anxiously coaxing down a few mouthsful. He has discovered that the longer he sits the longer she sits *with* him! If we would concentrate more of our interest and attention upon the child's play and less upon his meals, many so-called "feeding problems" would disappear. If we avoid injecting all sorts of other issues into the situation, we may have faith that a healthy child will eat when he is hungry a diet which, on the whole, will serve his needs.

Sleeping

We all share the sentiment, "God bless the man who first invented sleep," and we value sleep so highly for our children that in many cases we all but vitiate its value for them. Children differ as to the amount of sleep they need to keep in health and they differ in their readiness to shift from activity to complete relaxation. One child can be rough-housed to bed and shout "Heigh-ho Silver!"

with his last waking breath; another has to be soothed with a lullaby or a quiet story. One thing that mothers do generally agree upon is that hurrying a child off from whatever he may be doing to get him to bed is not very restful, either for the child or for the rest of the family.

It is not difficult to insure the very young child enough sleep. The difficulties come when he is a little older and becomes interested in what is going on around him. Especially when there are older brothers and sisters whom he is anxious to copy, going to bed before the others may seem to him an unfair discrimination. Going to bed means to the child being separated from contact with others, from the activities and pleasures going on. Since little children need more sleep than older persons, we find it necessary to have them go to bed alone, while others are still up and doing. If we can feel this from the child's point of view, we shall not expect him to *want* to go to sleep, and we shall spare ourselves irritations and indignations. We shall see that he has been active enough to be tired, but not too tired, we shall give him plenty of time to take leave of his game or his toys, and we shall try to make easier for him the transition from doing and being with others to silence and darkness and being alone.

We have to be careful to avoid every suggestion that sleep is a privation. We should never, for example, use sending to bed as a penalty. *Taking* the young child to bed as part of the routine is necessary until he is old enough to be *sent* without feeling that he is being dismissed.

While enough sleep for complete recuperation is necessary, it is not wise to insist upon an arbitrary amount of staying-in-bed, for waking idleness has other disadvantages, as we know. When it is necessary for a child to be left in his bed in the morning, or in his bedroom by himself, it is well to insure some occupation, such as a picturebook or a toy.

As the child grows older, the amount of sleep he needs declines. The afternoon nap for the toddler may continue for several years, but while we should give the child a chance to take all the sleep he will, it is not well to try to force it upon him. The older child, especially if there is anything going on at home, does not want to miss the excitement; and he will want to sleep in the daytime only when he is tired. In many cases a period of quiet waking may be quite as restful and relaxing as actual sleep. The child in the nursery school accepts the afternoon nap more readily than does the child at home. This is due in part to the fact that "everybody is doing it"; it is the custom of the community. And then there is nothing going on to miss, as there usually is at home.

The duration and the soundness of the nap gradually diminishes. After about the fourth year, few children continue to sleep, even under ideal conditions. The experience of nursery schools suggests, however, that if we can carry the child past this period of protest, he will, in many cases, take to the nap again and seem to benefit from it.

Older Theories of Discipline

However amenable the child has been to our management, however gently he has fitted himself to our regulations and requirements, there comes a time when his desires come into collision with ours.

During the early months, the child is able to carry out his primitive impulses and to have his needs supplied without causing much friction. We parents usually think of the problems which the child presents at this time as problems in management. Gradually, however, we become aware that we have to think of "discipline". Our basic attitude toward discipline will determine not only how we get along with the child during these early months

and years, but also how the child gets along with others later in life.

In the language of an older theology, parents used to speak of "the battle between two wills". Without going quite that far, many of us still feel that we have to meet an issue: shall we let the child have his way and grow up into an impossible and intolerable nuisance, or shall we assert our will, and so destroy his spontaneity and originality, his very selfhood? Such issues were relatively easy to decide when parents felt that their duty lay in breaking the child's will.

In an 1834 issue of *The Mother's Magazine* we find the following advice to parents: "Cost what it may, break the child down to obedience to the first command. And when this is once done, if you are careful *never* to let disobedience escape punishment of some kind or other, and punishment shall be effectual and triumphant, you will find it not difficult to maintain your absolute authority."

Wise men and women through all times have managed to exercise their power and authority over children in such a way as to help them grow up with increasing self-confidence and self-control. They knew that the child, left to himself, does not thrive on such "freedom", but suffers quite as much as the child who is constantly repressed, although in a different way. Instead of thinking of the conflict as a battle of wills, or as an issue between our discipline and the child's freedom, it is more profitable to state our problem differently: how can we exercise our authority and power—and superior wisdom, too, of course—so as to cultivate the child's freedom?

From very infancy every individual shows resentment, more or less violently, when his actions are obstructed, his efforts frustrated, or his wishes denied. Yet we cannot assume that as the child grows older he prefers to be

left to his own initiative, or to carry out all his impulses. On the contrary, we have clear indication that he does want guidance, that he prefers to be told what to do, what not to do, at many points. The child needs, then, an authority to spare him the risks of his own wild gropings and the responsibility for choosing among conflicting desires. The child has impulses which he fears to carry out.

The Divided Self

The young child is more contented and cheerful where the day-by-day activities rest upon a consistent, yet not too rigid, routine and where the deviations from this routine are mild and rational—that is, in harmony with the child's feeling of order and fitness, with his own desires. It is only in comparatively recent years that it has been possible to learn from young children themselves how they feel during this early adjustment to authority. Dr. Benjamin Spock says: "It looks as though the child's nature between two and three is urging him to decide things for himself, and to resist pressure from other people. Trying to fight these two battles without much world experience seems to get him tightened up inside, especially if his parents are a little too bossy."

The divided self, which has from ancient time been variously conceived and pictured—the conscience, the alter ego, the still small voice—appears from these studies to be a projection of the mother, who has been controlling the child by restraining his primitive impulses as well as ministering to his needs and gratifying his wishes. This mother is good to him, and beloved, but is, at the same time, a hostile power which sometimes interferes with his pleasures. The child's perception of this contradictory outside power is through his feelings: he cannot understand either why she comforts him or why she thwarts him. To quote Dr. Susan Isaacs, "He can

only picture her in terms of his own impulses and desires, his own feelings of blissful satisfaction or of pain and destructive rage. When she satisfies him, she seems 'good'; when she frustrates, she is felt to be 'bad' like his own feelings."

From this point of view, then, it is the child's experience with his mother that first creates for him his "conscience"—and that later determines largely what kind of conscience it is to be. This inner authority is in conflict with his own untrained impulses. Therefore, this inner authority seems to him vindictive, destructive, cruel. The child then comes, Dr. Isaacs writes, to "dread this 'bad' mother (or conscience) within him, for the very reason that she is built upon a pattern of his own impulses. He has no means of knowing, in this earliest phase, that she will not attack him in fury, as he wants to attack her, with teeth and nails and splitting cries when he cannot get what he wants."

The Child's Inner Fears

Parents know, of course, that in thus judging us by their own feelings, these young children are mistaken. We have to teach the child that we are kind, that we are considerate, that we have regard not only for what we believe to be good for him, but also for his actual feelings and desires. But how can we convince him? Certainly not by indulging every whim or wish; certainly not by letting him find out all by himself the dangers of the hard world of rocks and gravity and fire and moving cars; nor by letting him get into needless trouble with his surroundings and with other people; least of all by confirming his imaginings, by "disciplining" him vindictively ("punishing" him) or cruelly (being "strict") or withholding affection (being "stern", and just and cold).

Observations on older children have confirmed this

view in a very impressive way, by tracing to these infantile feelings many of the terrors and anxieties that sometimes persist. Quoting from Dr. Isaacs again,

"In their dreams and fears, in their play and talk, little children often give clear evidence that they dread, from those whom they offend or annoy, punishment so severe as to be comparable only to what they would themselves do in blind moments of uncontrollable rage and fury. . . . The so common night-terrors and screaming fits, reluctance to accept weaning, intense dislike of certain sorts of food, tantrums and mood of rigid obstinacy, breakdowns in cleanliness appearing frequently in well trained children during the second year, and the many specific phobias typical of the third and fourth years—all these have their deepest roots in this conflict"—a conflict between the primitive will and the conscience.

Dr. Isaacs recognizes, of course, that children differ widely, that their difficulties of this type will vary in number and intensity and form, and that they will be influenced by the child's individual experience, "but all show something of the kind, at some time during the first four or five years."

The Ego and Authority

These persisting anxieties, indicative of the continuing conflict between the impulses of the child and his conscience, or between his own self and the authority of the parent, can be prevented or mitigated in large measure by a wise and gentle discipline. If the child is forced to continue to think of all control as hostile and cruel, he is oriented toward a permanent conflict with authority at all levels, and of all kinds. As Dr. Isaacs interprets the development, ". . . the world remains an enchanted wood full of witches and ogres, never to be loved or trusted, only to be defied and fought, or cunningly cir-

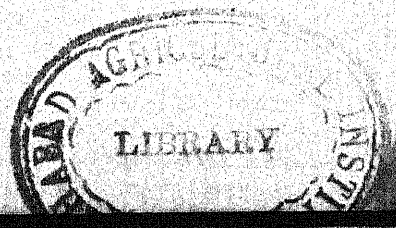
cumvented. The delinquent and anti-social child of later years is always one in whom these first primitive terrors have been confirmed and reenforced by unhappy early experiences by real neglect or cruelty or unwisdom from those who should have helped him against himself. The key to his trouble is not so much overstrong instinct, as an overdeveloped dread of savage punishment, which *has* to be defied and denied." Mrs. Isaacs makes it perfectly clear, however, that lack of discipline quite as much as over severe discipline leaves the child at the mercy of his own primitive feelings.

We sometimes see a child who is undisciplined or who is receiving from the parents what they consider "wholesome neglect", just spoiling for a fight. He may be merely playing for attention but at times he seems to be actually inviting punishment as an experiment, to prove to himself that his parents are really not as destructive, in spite of their great power—as his inner fears make them out to be. He will accept even severe punishment with great relief, for it is not nearly as bad as his terrors had pictured. He wants the burden of that conscience carried by somebody else, for the time being.

Brothers and Sisters

Even in our small families of today, most children have one brother or one sister. This other child is also a special child; whether he is older or younger he may be hard to accept. Very often, indeed, both children suffer after a second child is born.

The first child has been getting undivided attention from the parents, and perhaps from other relatives. Whether all this attention has been wise or not, the child has been thriving on it. On the arrival of the new baby, this attention is taken away suddenly and most unexpectedly. The baby naturally becomes a hated rival



for everything that makes life worth living—the affection and concern of the parents, especially the mother. The second child may be equally jealous. His older brother or sister is stronger and bigger and more privileged; by the very fact of being first he becomes an unequal and dangerous competitor in this rivalry for parental affection. Unless the parents recognize that this jealousy will normally appear, and are prepared for it, strong feelings of hostility often develop which continue to make life miserable for both children over many years.

If the day-by-day living with the first child is friendly and intimate, it is possible to have him share the interest in the expected new-comer and to help in details of the baby's care after its arrival. He can be made to feel rather important compared to this helpless mite, to realize that being a big brother or big sister is also a distinction. The younger child, too, can be helped to feel the special advantages which go with *his* position.

The father of a three-year-old boy was doing the regular putting to bed duties after the arrival of a younger child, and said, "Please hurry, I have to be busy with your brother." In a few minutes the child called, "Daddy! please be busy with me now."

We cannot altogether eliminate these early jealousies which are an inevitable accompaniment of family living, but we can and must mitigate their damaging effects by assuring both children a full and equal measure of our love and confidence. It is all too easy to show preferences, even where we feel that we are quite impartial in our loves. This danger is not met, however, by attempting arbitrarily to treat both, or all—where there are more than two—"exactly alike". The children are not exactly alike and should not be treated as if they were. Their differences, however, should be considered in terms that are

both relevant and within the comprehension of the children themselves. The older child can be made to feel an increasing sense of independence and responsibility. This means increasing considerateness for others, including the younger sister or brother. The younger child can be made to feel friendly and dependent—looking up to the older, as each looks up to the parents. Helping the younger means not dancing attendance, however; it means helping him to find his footing, showing him how, leading him on.

In households where there is regard for each personality, each child in time comes to feel secure and to have corresponding regard and friendliness toward the others. Where each gets according to his needs, there is less occasion to demand more, to overreach, to resent the others. Where each is given opportunity to assert himself and to get recognition according to his capacities, there is less temptation to become arrogant and exacting. From the first months the child has to learn to live with others. This experience begins with his family and continues as this circle enlarges.

Play

In our eagerness to insure for our precious children the best of all that is good for them, we have discovered that play is important, although the discovery is not altogether new. What is new is the solemn attempt to put play into the child's program as a period of enjoyment under orders.

We learn much in playing with our little babies and perhaps more in being allowed to share in the play of our toddlers. But since recreation—the remaking of body and mind through play—requires joy and relaxation, it is futile to try to *make* a child "go out and play". Always, at any age, there must be something to do and, nearly

always, someone to play with. The parent often has to help the child find these.

The young child in his daily play is gradually building powers and skills which he will need throughout his life. Play he will, in any case, with the natural urge of any young animal; but wisely selected toys and equipment can help to make that play count toward a full and balanced development. Simple playthings are the best. They should be sturdy and strong and pleasing to look at, and above all they should be things with which to do.

Children need materials for climbing, sliding, pulling, pushing, throwing, and balancing: swings, slides and jungle gyms, seesaws and balance boards, kiddie cars and tricycles, balls and bean bags; or hay lofts, cellar doors, kitchen steps, stone walls, apple trees and ladders for those fortunate children who live where these invitations to active play are still part of the everyday world.

In more formal communities, where these are lacking, a group of parents of young children will sometimes club together to construct or purchase yard equipment. Incidentally this plan has more than economic merit. For children need to have social experiences beyond those with their own parents—or with older or younger brothers and sisters. Parents can see to it that their children have other social experiences. They need the chance to work and play with children of their own age, and opportunities to learn how others think and feel. If our children are to be happy in the school world—and in the greater world outside—they must learn early to get along with other children, as well as with adults.

The Nursery School

In recent years the idea of the nursery school has been gaining ground, although it is still far from being gen-

erally accepted. Indeed there is a great deal of hostility to the name, among people who might find the institution of great help to them. It sounds like another one of those new-fangled notions that come from large cities, or from eccentric educators. Actually, however, there is nothing new-fangled about it—aside from the name—except that it means bringing young children to a particular place. As long as people have had neighbors, little children have played together. Whenever there were older children about it was part of their duty to keep an eye on the little ones and lend a hand.

Today, while we have more neighbors than ever, there is also less space for the children to play together and fewer older children to help look after the younger ones. A special place has to be provided, and the little ones have to be assembled in the morning and then redistributed. Nursery schools have developed not merely because more and more mothers have to go to work. The nursery school—which is of course no "school" at all, in one sense—is for the children themselves. It is they who need one another's companionship and its competent supervision is much more helpful to them. The nursery school is an organized substitute for the larger family and the casual neighborhood group. From the point of view of the young child, we may say that this coming together to play and to learn from one another—with guidance and protection, of course—is among the oldest of the social functions. It is only the devices we use to carry out these ancient purposes that are new.

Growing Independence

The best results of training and playing show that through both the child grows in independence. The littlest children enjoy doing things for themselves if they are introduced to the tasks in the spirit of a game. An infant

can pull off his own socks and thrust his own arms into sleeves. A two-year-old can put on many of his clothes—though he needs and wants help with buttons and lacings. He can make a pretty good job of feeding himself, too, if he is allowed to hold his own cup and to spoon up his own cereal as soon as he shows signs of wanting to try. But occasionally his mother will have to help him along, when he is tired or restless or not very hungry. He loves to wash his own hands, and to brush his teeth, though an adult may need to give them a finishing touch. He will help to pick up his toys and put them away, but it is too much to expect him to do it all by himself. It is easier and quicker to do these things for him, of course. He is far from neat at first. But this is the time when he is most interested in learning to help himself. What he gains in independence is well worth the extra time and trouble. From these beginnings he progresses rapidly, learning new skills and growing in responsibility from year to year.

If a little child played out of doors with sand and stones and leaves and twigs, no one would dream of asking him to put everything back again where he found it. If someone did, however, we might then recognize the artificiality of our demands upon the child for neatness. The blocks and other toys that we give children are substitutes for natural play materials. They get in *our* way in the house, and so we have to help the child put them where they belong, for us; and we help him, in time, to appreciate that this procedure is not arbitrary, but has values for all of us. What we call disorder is very often entirely acceptable to the little child. By this I do not mean, as already pointed out in considering other aspects of the child's development, that we should let the child go his own way, but merely that we must make a distinction between what we get the child to do and what he

really wants to do, and choose our methods accordingly.

By accommodating a little world within our big world —by having children's things in scale with children—they are encouraged to fit in. No household is too cramped for baby to have a corner of his own, no bathroom so tiny that a step cannot be there to encourage him to help himself.

Gradually, from infancy to school age, a child learns to care for himself in routine matters—washing, dressing, eating, toileting, keeping track of his possessions, and going about alone where it seems safe. But we must be clear that we cannot fairly expect complete independence even from an accomplished six-year-old. Much, much less, of course, can we expect it of the five-year-old who is straining at the leash, or the four, with one foot "in the nursery and the other in the town". We parents are sometimes guilty, when given an inch, of taking a mile.

Independence a Burden

The child is able to carry many tasks but we must not expect him to like to do so, nor to want to. It is one thing to be able to wash or dress or clean one's teeth, but quite another to *want* to do it, or to be interested enough to remember. Children are reluctant to relinquish forever the comforting knowledge that mother is ready to help. Even quite big children need to be helped or babied occasionally—especially on days when life has been hard and all has not gone too well. They seem to need this kind of comforting reassurance as a foundation for true independence. They still need a great deal of supervision and help—and an infinite amount of reminding.

For independence cannot be forced; it must be fostered. And children differ widely in the speed with which they achieve it. Independence is a thing of the spirit. It is a matter of feeling, as well as of knowing and doing. It

grows in an atmosphere of loving cooperation, of patient teaching, of hopeful expectation. It must await the child's own readiness if it is to be real and lasting. The baby bird does not have to be taught to fly. There comes a time when the inner growth has reached just the point that makes flying possible. It is not necessary to hurry the process—some of these growth processes we cannot hurry by merely throwing the bird out of the nest, so to say. Nor is it necessary to hold back. That, apparently, is possible, and it is being done; but then we may defeat our purposes. For there is a tempo to the maturing process —and each child's pace is his own.

As we see a sound, sturdy body growing, as sound and sturdy as scientific knowledge and loving care can make it, we see also that the infant of yesterday is developing healthy habits and is learning to look after himself. We expect, too, that his mental maturing is keeping pace with the other growth. Sometimes it is difficult, but always it is necessary, to allow for the fact that here, too, some are slower than others, and that some proceed more quickly along certain lines. One is more adept with his hands, another with the use of language, another in music or the arts.

Answering Questions

The education of children is never static. Even in the cradle they are learning constantly from the world and the people around them and from their own play experiences. We see the toddler touching and tasting and smelling everything about him. That is his way of learning the difference between hard and soft, heavy and light, cold and hot, rough and smooth, sweet and sour. It is the child's way of exploring before he can put his questions through words.

As he grows older he learns other things—the mean-

ing and use of language, the ways that people behave, the accepted rules of his own playmates, the use and purpose of all the common objects in his everyday world. Soon he wants to know how things work and why things grow—the how and why of everything from stoves to engines, from boats to stars. The everyday planning of an everyday program should allow the child time to satisfy for himself his natural curiosity.

A child's interest in an ant or butterfly may be a key to the fascinating life of the insect world. His wonder over the perfect pattern of a flower or shell is his first lesson in the beauty of form throughout the universe. In discussing a bird building its nest or a dog feeding her pups he discovers how the young are cared for in the animal world. The skillful adult can use such opportunities to develop children's understanding.

We have to be patient with the child's questions, for there is more involved than imparting information—which we may or may not have. It takes insight as well as knowledge to discover what the child really wants to know, to understand the limitations of his purpose, as well as the possible meaning to him of our answers. We do not need to set ourselves up as final authorities. Sometimes finding out together—from books, from music, from nature, from imagination—is a joyous experience through which parent and child are drawn closer to each other. Here is an invaluable aid toward building between them a relationship of confidence and understanding.

The Unanswerable Questions

So long as the child's questions have to do with butterflies or engines, parents are willing—even anxious—to offer him explanations and answers. But when he comes to questions which involve factors which we sometimes identify with "religion", we are less ready. Yet we hesi-

tate to say, "I don't know". While we can successfully evade many questions, we know that we are "teaching" through our very evasions—although not teaching exactly what we intend. What can parents do when such questions come?

First, we have to acknowledge to ourselves—and to the child of course—that there are really many questions that we cannot answer at all. For that we need not apologize: the world is too full for human mastery. We answer where we can; we make some effort to find an answer—ask father, or a friend, look up a book—or we send the child to things, to persons, and eventually to books—which are really other people like ourselves, speaking through written words. We sometimes say that we do not know, we shall try to find out, or that nobody knows.

In some cases we must face our own fear of the questions themselves, aside from the difficulty of answering. The great questions on first and last things always carry heavy charges of feeling. A question about the origin of the earth, or about the origin of babies, for example, may be asked by the child in good faith. But many of us cannot answer it in the same spirit, because we no longer accept the answers which we ourselves received in our childhood, whereas the answers that we learned later seem beyond the comprehension of the child. We might find it easier if we could convince ourselves that these questions are not only legitimate but *will* be answered somehow, whatever we do. The young child does not want a dissertation on embryology or cosmology. But sooner or later questions of this type lead the intelligent growing child back to first causes—to gods or a God, in one form or another. In the same class are the child's questions about death, about what becomes of people who die.

Parents who follow a definite creed can answer these questions without hesitation. For them there is no prob-

lem. The difficulty is for mothers and fathers who are unable to accept any systematic creed but who realize the distress which children experience when we are unable to give them any kind of guiding principles. If we cannot give our children doctrine with assurance, we must at least convey to them our own feeling of confidence in the order and rationality of the world.

Different Kinds of Questions

Before considering what answers are possible, we have to be clear in our own minds as to what the questions mean—to the child. What does being "dead" mean to children? They hear of somebody having died, they may see a funeral procession, or even attend funeral services. Their thoughts are neither on the mortality of the flesh nor on the immortality of the soul. They have a feeling that something unpleasant has happened; people are sad, some weep. There is something in the voice that suggests awe. But what *did* become of Bobby's father or grandfather? Why can't he ever come back?

The child is not here asking a question of fact, like those we ask the scientist to answer for us. These are questions of feeling and sentiment, or of faith—and hope. If we do not believe in immortality as a doctrine, for example, we can still share with a child the feeling that, even after someone has died, something of his personality lives on. Here many people have many views—which is just what the child should find out in time. But we cannot tell him that, for such an answer would only bewilder him. Nor will the child be satisfied to be told that some people think this and some that. What do *you* think? And *why* don't others agree?

We can probably best prepare ourselves to meet the child's unanswerable questions not through earnest efforts to learn the right answers in advance, but through shar-

ing with the child his intellectual progress from the fairy tales onward. We can tell him and later read to him fairy tales and folk tales and fables and myths from all lands. The value of these primitive fancies lies, for our purpose, in the fact that they harmonize with the child's way of seeing and grasping the world. He does not need to distinguish between a poetical conception and literal truth. We do not have to warn him that the lion really could not speak to the mouse nor that the ancient myths must not be accepted as history. Children sense that some things are truer than literal truth.

Most of the child's early months and early years are spent with his parents. And we are constantly reminded that "a child—your child—grows only once". A realization of this can discourage and paralyze but it should really challenge and stimulate. It is a challenge to evaluate our efforts and ask ourselves whether the child is getting the best which we have to offer, month by month, during these so-called nursery years. We need not be overwhelmed by the magnitude of our task, nor by the multitude of details. Since no child, and no one of us even in a lifetime, needs to learn everything, our purpose is only to preserve that close relationship between parent and child that we prize so highly. Even the effort will enrich our living together and make it more enjoyable.

V

HALFWAY UP THE STAIRS

Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up,
And isn't down.
It isn't in the nursery,
It isn't in the town.
And all sorts of funny thoughts
Run around my head:
"It isn't really
anywhere!
It's somewhere else
Instead."

A. A. MILNE

One by one the various phases of childhood have commanded the center of the stage in the thoughts and efforts of people concerned with children. For the parent the interest has always been chronological. We begin with the newborn infant and go on through the child's life to maturity and each age is, at its own time, important to us. But the interest of educators and scientists has fluctuated from period to period as scientific discoveries and greater insight have increased both our knowledge and our concern about one another. The spotlight has been focused upon each phase in turn, and each in its time has been called "the neglected age".

The neglected age of today hasn't even a name, such

as "the infant," "the pre-school child," or "the adolescent." The child is simply eight or nine or ten or eleven years old—too old to be particularly fascinating to his elders or to need their constant care and watching, yet not old enough to compel attention with new problems or to be taken seriously as a person.

He is "halfway up". At home neither "in the nursery" of little childhood nor "in the town" of grown-up life, he finds himself in a strange isolation. Children but a little younger are to him only babies, while children only a little older are almost as far away as grown-ups, not interested in the serious business of play and adventure, but concerned instead with silly things like dress, or abstract discussions, or love. Grown-ups are even worse, of course, for they cannot be dealt with systematically and their ways are past understanding.

We adults are, indeed, unreasonable but only because we do not know what to expect of these children whose growing up has taken us all unawares. At one moment we think we see glimpses of maturity, at the next we discover that the boy or girl is still astonishingly young. This inconsistency leads us to expect too much of the child in some directions and too little in others. We are inconsistent ourselves for we expect the child to develop independence even while we struggle to retain our control. We admonish the boy to "be a man" but in the next moment we scold him for presuming some of a man's prerogatives. He is "too big to cry" but he is too little to be trusted out of sight. We insist that children are now old enough to take care of themselves, when it comes to keeping their clothing neat and remembering where they put their schoolbooks, but we do not admit that they are old enough to stay out with their friends after school without special permission or to make their own choices in spending their time or their money.

If we pitch our expectations too high, we give the child little chance to experience success or achievement; if we pitch them too low, we affront his growing personality. How shall we find the happy mean? What guidance does the child need at this stage of his development?

The parent's role of guide is especially difficult now because the children make no insistent demands and they seem to be getting along very nicely without much attention. The routines of school and play fill their time and thought and they are usually satisfied to be neglected by their parents. The guidance that they need is of a subtle variety and it must be administered tactfully.

Trying Their Wings

The very independence of these children halfway up the stairs gives us a clue to their desires and needs. They want to step out from the sheltering walls of home and to escape also from its domination. They want to extend their action and thought beyond the familiar, to develop their own interests and to become acquainted with the great world and what is going on there. For all that, however, the child is not quite certain of his ability to cope with everything he meets in the thrilling, but somewhat frightening, world. He is confused because he wants freedom and adventure and he also wants protection and security. He sometimes resents help and advice when it is given but he is, nevertheless, still the little child coming to his parents for solace when the world outside is harsh or threatening. When the threat is passed he turns again from the safe world of mother and father to the more exciting world of girls and boys.

At this age the child is disposed to associate himself more and more closely with others, usually of the same sex. It is as if the boy, having been satisfied to play with all children of his age, more or less directed by elders,

gradually discovers that he has more in common with other boys than he has with the mixed group. And similarly girls are inclined to go off by themselves. The children tend now not only to become segregated by sexes but to separate themselves off into closed groups or societies. In many cases such groups develop their "secrets" and their own languages which are, as a rule, but tricky distortions of the mother tongue, although often they include special words and phrases that are quite without meaning or even deliberately annoying to outsiders—especially older people.

In many instances adults have learned, or adolescents have recalled, that a society or gang thus formed subsequently nurtured a secret to justify its existence. The secret became the bond among the fellows of a mystic order. Children need these bonds; a secret gives them both a certain assurance in themselves and a feeling of independence of the grown-ups. Their common activities are, of course, great fun, and the secrets may furnish some thrill but the great thing seems to be the increasing confidence in themselves, in their ability to do things without the direction and control of parents and teachers —perhaps even in opposition to their elders.

Sex Differences in Interests

It is rarely that these gangs or societies include both girls and boys. The separation of the sexes is sometimes so marked that many parents and teachers have raised serious doubts as to the wisdom of co-education during these years. There are, however, good reasons for having the children take part in the activities of mixed groups even if their keenest interests are those they share with their separate sets. For the individual boy or girl the way should always be open to play with somebody of the opposite sex, and no point should be made of a change in

interest, one way or the other. It is not necessary to force the child either way.

The spontaneous segregation has, of course, raised even more far-reaching questions as to sex differences. In the modern schools that have attempted to maintain "equality" of opportunity and treatment for girls and boys—largely in line with the revolt against historical abuses and discriminations against women—teachers are constantly astonished to find decided differences both in capacities and in interests. Are these differences innate or do they appear as a result of traditional influences or the expectations we unconsciously hold out to girls and boys?

We, today, feel free to accept sex differences without implying that differences are themselves invidious. We have learned to use the word "different" without meaning better or worse.

A girl in a very progressive school came home one day with a serious problem. "Why is it," she asked, "that when the teacher explained about how the pump works, the dumbest boys understood it right away but the brightest girls couldn't get it?" These boys and girls had been in co-educational classes from the earliest years, had been exposed to the same instruction and activities and to the same teachers, many of whom were determined to show the world that there really are no differences between the interests of girls and boys.

A boy of seven and his sister of nine had been playing with dolls for several evenings. The boy complained to the mother that when they played house, he, as the father, had too little opportunity to be with the baby. The play mother bathed and dressed the doll baby and fed it and then she just let him wheel it in the park—the living room. The sister tried to be reasonable. "Well," she said, "let's play that I have a job and come home late

and you have to bathe the baby and fix her up before I come home." That was not satisfactory: the boy wanted the baby in his room at night too. A compromise was reached and he had the baby. But after three days the baby was so shamefully neglected that it had to be returned to the ministrations of the girl. We know, of course, that there are exceptions, that there are boys who like to play with dolls and girls who do not, that there are girls who are more interested in machinery than in the domestic arts. Yet we must admit that these are the exceptions and that, whether from innate disposition or from environmental influences, certain interests are found predominantly in girls and certain interests in boys.

Chemistry teachers in progressive schools report that many girls do excellent work in chemistry; but more commonly they reach a point at which they either shift their interest to the chemistry of dyeing cloth and otherwise beautifying the world, or out of the field entirely. Before the invention of vacuum tubes made it possible to carry speech over the radio, hundreds of thousands of boys tinkered with the making of sets and hook-ups; but although I knew of hundreds of boys who were fascinated by the new mystery and experimented with the materials, I came across only one girl who cared enough to take the trouble to build a set.

Whatever we may believe as to how far such sex differences are innate and how far acquired—and we have not enough knowledge to settle the question one way or another—it remains true that both boys and girls have to make the same kind of social adjustment in a larger sense.

Revising Our Discipline

In the process of finding their places in relation to others and of learning to live as members of a group,

both boys and girls form individual attachments and group loyalties that sometimes conflict with the conventions and demands of school and home. The rules and standards that seem to develop spontaneously among the boys or girls in such groups are much more important to a child than those set up by his teachers and parents. If adults are aware of these rules of the game, and respect them, they have a much better chance of having their own conventions respected. Scorn for the newly formed organizations and newly made friends and newly found hobbies, or even good-natured ridicule, puts the child on the defensive. It then becomes difficult to win his confidence which is, of course, one thing that cannot possibly be forced.

In this period authority takes on new meanings. We may have prided ourselves, during the earlier years, that we had successfully trained the child to obedience and regularity. He knew what was expected of him. He rarely did the forbidden. He was reasonably prompt in going to bed when reminded, in putting away his things, in washing and dressing himself. We had naturally assumed that the early training would serve a lifetime. But in many instances this beautiful state of things vanishes almost without warning. Bedtime becomes a daily struggle; hats and coats, books and toys are left lying about with no regard for order. The child, whose vocabulary had been progressing so nicely, now limits his speech to monosyllables and slang, although he may get a high score in the school's vocabulary tests and write excellent compositions. Getting him washed now takes more effort in the reminding than did the baby's personally conducted bath. Is this the fruit of all our careful groundwork?

The child has been growing and the center of his world has shifted from his mother and father to his playmates. His choice of companions indicates the perfectly natural

development of new interests which are not and cannot be satisfied by the home and family. He has arrived at an age in which he cares only for the approval of his own age-mates. Our parental discipline, depending for its effectiveness upon our approvals and disapprovals, languishes. In the world which the child now inhabits, the washing of hands or the way we may like him to look is not a matter of interest. Coats and hats are incidental. Abbreviated words and slang are "the thing." Bedtime is a necessary evil, to be put off as long as possible. It is natural for us to remind the child but it is not natural for the child to want to comply in the face of all the other interests and temptations. He knows, of course, that in the end he *must* comply. Yet, if we but intimated that we understood how difficult it was for him to cooperate, he would accept our demands more gracefully than when we take it for granted that he *should want* to do the things *we require of him.* If, on the other hand, such understanding is lacking and if the earlier discipline was too rigid, there is danger now of violent reaction against all authority.

The Importance of Play

The spontaneous activities which older people look upon as play, and therefore as of slight moment, are for the child who is beginning to grow up and to search for wider horizons, new regions to explore.

In certain instances the child's play, as well as his choice of playmates, may be very revealing since in his play the child dramatizes many of his innermost needs and ambitions and finds satisfying outlet for both his physical and emotional drives. We need not fear, however, that the interests which children show at this stage will be permanent. Not every boy who admires Lindbergh will be an aviator not every girl who is enamoured

of the screen star of the moment will become a movie actress. Neither will every child, who through an attack of chicken pox, or through reading an inspiring book, becomes interested in medicine, turn out to be a great doctor or nurse. Play is important not as foretelling a child's future interests but as an experience in itself and as a wholesome outlet for present drives toward activity and expression.

Reading, listening to the radio and watching movies are also important parts of the child's experience during the years between eight and twelve. For although sitting and reading or listening may look exactly like just sitting, it is activity and may be extremely profitable. At this age, at any rate, the child usually appears to be avid for the greatest amount and greatest variety of this type of activity and the parent's task is to let him range widely, to give him some guidance but very little prohibition.

Valuable as these experiences certainly are, they are only vicarious ones. In as many ways as possible, we should give children opportunities for *real* experience. This may take the form of trips or dramatics, games, dancing, craft or shop work, making collections, photography, or various other forms of adventure and creative play. The first results of our effort to enrich their play are very gratifying, since these activities can be introduced easily into the groups and clubs that children form so readily at this time. But our very success often brings difficulties. For if the activities are really interesting, the children are later than ever to supper. Their rooms, and even the family living room and back yard, become cluttered. Groups of children troop into the house at all hours or go off on expeditions which cause their parents many moments of worry. It is certainly important that children learn to consider their parents' needs and comforts. But parents must realize that a certain amount of

inconvenience, or even worry, is not too high a price to pay for the experience which the children are gaining.

The problem of supplying experience that is both meaningful and safe is peculiar to our time and culture. We cannot leave children completely alone to find their own entertainment because, with the ever increasing complexity of life, dangers have also been growing. Yet too much supervision brings a danger of its own as it cramps the style of growing personalities. We must use our ingenuity to find activities which can be controlled to some extent but which still leave a wide scope for individual effort, initiative and development.

Growing Into Responsibility

The halfway up child needs another type of experience, the kind that has to do with the ordinary affairs of living, of finding and holding his place among others. Now he is moving into position as a person; no longer is he the family's baby. It is hard to act grown up all of a sudden, especially if you suspect that the others do not recognize your new state. To be able to guide him helpfully at this stage, a parent must accept the fact that the child has now increasingly to assert his own personality, to get recognition, or at least attention. He has to "put himself across" even if the only way he knows is by seeing how far he can go in flouting the established regulations. He needs to be made to feel that his ability to do the regular things is taken for granted. He has to see that the demands made upon him are not like those made upon an infant who does not know what is expected, but like those made upon a responsible, cooperative member of a group. He is expected, that is, not merely to "obey" certain more or less arbitrary "rules", but to share actively in the common affairs of the household, in making life more agreeable for all concerned. He must be helped

to discover that arbitrary as rules may be, they are accepted by all the partners in the establishment for their convenience in making group living more comfortable.

The inner personal needs of the child have to be harmonized with the demands which are made upon him in living with other persons in many kinds of relationships. Of course that means accepting responsibility. But he does not acquire responsibility all at once, like putting on long trousers. It is a slow growth, which is strongly influenced by the home situation. While the child is still in need of affectionate protection and even control in the home at this time, the parent must anticipate the advent of adolescence, when this control will be relinquished. He must emancipate himself from the need to use the child as an object upon which to exercise his power and authority. He must watch for indications of the child's readiness to assume responsibility, giving him freedom to advance in responsibility and self-direction.

Instead of waiting for an important mark on the calendar—his thirteenth or eighteenth or twenty-first birthday—and then rushing upon the child with the keys to the city, we must consciously release him bit by bit from childish restrictions. In countless small ways we can help him feel that he is growing in power and in freedom. There are errands to be done, street crossings to be made alone and unattended—on occasion a latchkey to be carried. Through the stretch of years the child can learn to handle money, increasing amounts to be spent for the household, as well as his own allowance; he can answer the telephone and receive and transmit more and more elaborate and important messages; he can take charge of a younger child; he can be left at home alone. It is thus that the child learns to rise to new occasions, to meet responsibilities as they come. Gradually he learns to be on his own and to sense the increasing dignity of the con-

fidence which others place in him. These are all conditions essential to growth in responsibility, through a balance of protection and independence in which protection becomes progressively less and independence steadily greater.

The Parents' New Role

As a result of his increasing independence, the child comes to look upon us, the parents, with newly opened eyes. And we are sometimes tempted to wish that the eyes hadn't opened quite so wide or that they had remained closed for just a little longer. The child discovers that there are fathers who are taller or stronger than his own, mothers more wise or beautiful. More disconcerting still, he suspects that neither of his parents is infallible or omnipotent. His gods, although they have not actually fallen, at least are shown to have feet of clay.

We, possibly following our children's example, look at ourselves in a new light and wonder whether, and how, this disillusionment could have been avoided. We should recognize that to some extent it is inevitable. It might have been a trifle less painful if we had not encouraged our children to believe that we *did* know everything and that we never made mistakes. All along the line it is wholesome for parents to admit that they can make mistakes.

We have some misgivings, too, because we cannot always answer our children's questions and help them with the problems—expressed and unexpressed—which are puzzling them at this period. For the guidance which children most profitably receive at this time calls for a broader outlook than most of us usually attain in the ordinary course of events. Special efforts are necessary if we are to recognize the opportunities which are constantly present and if we are to equip ourselves to use them effectively.

The readiness of the parents, or their lack of readiness, shows itself in various ways. The child is eager, for example, to absorb a vast amount of information, and we usually respond to him with equal eagerness, telling him what we know and helping him to find ways of learning things for himself. Occasionally, however, a child asks a question, just as he has asked hundreds before, and the reply he receives leaves him much more confused and less satisfied than he was in his uncomplicated ignorance. His feeling of confusion comes, of course, from the parent's lack of certainty and his own emotional strains.

Answering Children's Questions

In meeting the questions of children of this age about sex and reproduction, for example, many parents either put them off with as perfunctory answers as possible or else, following the let's-be-modern school, they tell all and spare no detail. Again, when questions are asked about the family's economic status or its income, or about some of the implications of our living in a money economy, most parents are too confused to answer. That would be forgivable (even professional economists are sometimes suspected of being confused) but these parents are emotionally involved to such an extent that they are unable to answer even the relatively simple questions which concern the children most, or to admit that they do not know. Questions about death, about sex, about money, poverty, business ethics, religious differences, race prejudices terrify us either into ominous silences or into a tone of voice that tells the young inquirer, more plainly than words, that this is a realm of inquiry somehow mysterious and not good for him to pursue.

In many such situations we are entitled to acknowledge our limitations; or rather, the child is entitled to know that the grown-ups have not yet found final answers to

many of the questions that puzzle him as they had puzzled our ancestors. Whether or not we feel capable of meeting such questions, we may be sure first that the child is going to get a vast amount of information from other sources, and second, that he will supplement what is told him with what he can learn by observing what people actually do. From his companions and from the homes he visits, as well as from casual contacts and those vicarious experiences that nobody can escape, he will derive his "facts" and his attitudes. The parent's responsibility still remains to help the child reconcile the many conflicting doctrines and practices, if not with one another—for that is indeed impossible—then with a better understanding of human beings and their various drives and backgrounds. The parent has to recognize in a child's questions an opportunity for answering now—now, when he so eagerly absorbs information, so easily accumulates ideas that shape his attitudes.

Parents must beware, however, of exploiting their children's simple questioning by overwhelming them with too much information and too many ideas. We have had enough experience to know that this may be just as devastating as squelching a child or putting him off and just as likely to discourage the further asking of questions.

A little girl asked her mother one of the usual eight-year-old "how" or "why" questions. The mother, grateful at such moments for her learned—if somewhat pedantic—husband, said: "I don't know, dear, you'd better ask Daddy." She was somewhat startled when she heard the reply, "But, Mother, I don't want to know so *much!*"

We will have to be willing to answer the child's questions in terms of other people's ideas as well as our own. Sooner or later he will discover for himself that other people think differently, believe differently, than we do on

these questions. We will help him to find his way among the many conflicting answers if we are careful to differentiate in our own replies between what we *know* and what we *believe*. We may rest assured that our convictions will carry weight with our children, but they are entitled to know that other people, equally sincerely, believe differently.

Playmates

It is natural for parents to be solicitous regarding the possible evil influence of playmates from homes of differing standards. Perhaps those other children are not so clean or perhaps their speech is not so elegant as we should like. Even if they are fond of our children they may have poor taste in other respects and we may fear that they will counteract some of our efforts. The friendships which children form at this period are generally transitory. For the time being, the chances are that any particular child will gain more from the companionship of other children—even those that we do not consider the most "desirable"—than he will lose. Furthermore, if we have any faith in our own standards and manners and influence we can be certain that our children will not be so easily contaminated. A structure of ideals built on a firm foundation is not likely to topple over so easily.

A child's preferences among his companions can reveal his particular needs to the observant parent. The child who is so sociable that he must always be in the midst of a crowd and, at the other extreme, the child who shuns all companionship, both give evidence of a need for escape. The child who invariably chooses an older or very clever companion, and the one who gets along only with playmates who are younger or weaker than himself, both show some need that they are seeking to satisfy. Parents must recognize that individuals nor-

mally differ in these respects. There is a great variety in patterns of social behavior, any one of which, within certain limits, may be normal for a particular child. Yet parents must learn to see in a child's extreme preferences or aversions a possible symptom of unmet needs, a cue that the child needs help.

Friendships

Children need companions of their own age and frequently it is a difficult matter for the over-solicitous mother to discover companions whom she considers "suitable," particularly in a small community. Yet a child who is forced to grow up with too few or too carefully censored friends emerges into an adolescent world with a real handicap.

There was the case of a frail little girl who had been associating with another one only a year older, but much more robust, more mature and more sophisticated. The teachers considered the latter a difficult child, one with problems of lying and other manifestations of maladjustment, and had warned the parents of the younger one against the possible effects of the friendship. The school also tried to discourage the association, with the natural consequence that the two girls clung more closely together. The mother of the younger girl relied upon watchful waiting, invited the older friend to her home, treated her in every way as a person. Years later, after the girls had been separated for some time, the younger girl one day asked her mother, "Did you know those things about Margy when we were in school together?" The mother acknowledged that she had known right along. "Then weren't you afraid?" The mother replied, "I knew that I could only stand by and let you have your own experience. I could not tell you everything; some things we don't learn from telling."

This girl was wondering why she and Margy had become so much attached. "The reason we were such good friends," she speculated, "was that neither of us had ever had a friend before to whom you could tell *everything*." That sounded reasonable enough, but something in her mother's face prompted her to add, "I suppose you think I could tell *you* everything, Mother? . . . Well, you are very understanding, Mother, but you are a grown-up."

The child needs companionship for a great many different reasons and, like older persons, will find a multitude of his special needs met by various individuals, just as we play bridge with some friends and listen to music with others. The close attachments that children form are born of more intimate needs which are not easily met by a casual or random companion, or even by a very "understanding" parent. The parent must understand that and not attempt to draw up specifications in too great detail. Both for the growth of his own personality and for his adjustment to a world of other varied personalities, the child must have a wider range of acquaintances than the home is likely to find for him.

Encouraging Companionship

Sometimes, however, in our present way of living, companionship may need parental fostering. Classmates in a single school may live far apart or find themselves separated from one another by the barriers of apartment house living. Nor is it only in cities that this is so. A father complains that in their beautiful country home, equipped with all sorts of conveniences and play apparatus, his two sons of seven and ten are at a loss for someone to play with. There simply isn't another seven- or ten-year-old within a mile radius and so the services and forethought of adults are constantly needed in providing companions for these boys. "But", this father complains,

"at their age I used to go out and dig up my own companions—along with my worms for fishing." Here again practical difficulties intervene in the form of several dangerous crossings past which the children would have to go to find even a stream for fishing. Modern life presents many hazards which our fathers happily lacked.

It is necessary for children to come to know many others besides those who think and act and feel as do their parents. It is not the role of the parent to choose for the child but to help him fit the great variety of personalities into his scheme of things. A mother was obliged by reason of changed economic circumstances to move into a "poorer" neighborhood. She reconciled herself to her eleven-year-old boy's attendance at the neighborhood school but she insisted that he come straight home immediately after school as she did not consider the children of the district fit for him to associate with. Of course parents must protect their children against truly dangerous or injurious exposures and influences. But this mother was quite unaware that the spiritual isolation of her son would be more devastating than any injury likely to come to him from almost any neighborhood. There must be many other children in about the same state. This mother's sweeping judgment was, of course, based on superficial considerations—clothing, speech, manners. These may, to be sure, be indicative of something more deep-seated but they are not in themselves a reliable basis for selecting or rejecting "suitable companions."

A college professor, whose boy played incessantly with the son of a dog-racer, tried to be tolerant but sometimes had misgivings. One day the professor asked his son, "Why do you like to play with Bill so much?" The child pondered a few moments and said, "I guess it's just because I love him."

Adaptability will probably be the greatest asset in the

world of tomorrow. Fortunately, the characteristic is one which naturally belongs to youth, but it can be encouraged or discouraged by parental guidance. The child who has had the benefit of wider horizons, who has been permitted varied friendships, will become more adaptable than the child whose life has been restricted to the small family circle, whose play and playmates have been too rigidly supervised.

VI

TOWARD ADULTHOOD

Many of us had hoped that with our greater parental insight today, our increased understanding of childhood and its needs, we would somehow avert or circumvent the adolescent difficulties famed in song and story. Let us recognize at the outset that no amount of insight, no degree of understanding, can eliminate all the strains and stresses that are inherent in this process of growing up. Our understanding and insight may aid greatly in easing adjustments and in maintaining satisfactory relationships but adolescence will remain for most children—and for their parents too—a difficult stretch of years.

What is this problem of maturing? How much of it is due to physiological changes? How much to emotional changes? How much is it determined by the kind of society in which the young person lives, or the kind of home?

The fundamental changes are from within. They are in the nature of the species and are part of the growing process no matter what the culture. Whether a boy or girl is living in Toronto or Denver, whether he or she is white or colored, whether his or her ancestors came to America on the Mayflower or on a later boat, certain basic adjustments have to be made by each individual.

This maturing process is as dramatic and painful as is the birth process. It really means the birth of a new personality. It means that the child escapes from the

security and comfort of childhood dependence and turns to assert himself against those who sheltered and nurtured him. That is something which we parents must understand and face. This process is like birth in that it calls upon the parents, especially the mothers, to give up something that has long been a part of themselves.

Inner Struggles

The struggle between the two generations would be comparatively simple if it were merely a conflict between parent and child. Actually the child's protesting and fighting are not so much against that other person, the parent, as against his own dependence upon that parent, his own inability to live his own life. Hard as the adolescent struggles to grow up, he is at the same time fighting the fear of growing up, of taking on responsibility, of being indeed free, but at the cost of the warmth and security which he has always had at home.

Parents, for their part, find it difficult to appreciate that at this stage of growth each young individual is discovering himself as a unique personality, as having unique significance. The youth is beginning to feel that he is different, that no one like him has ever existed before. To ridicule these feelings or to snub the adolescent's aspirations is not only to belittle the emerging personality, it is to cheapen what is most precious in the human being.

Because of the emotional changes which are taking place, boys and girls have their moments of upward reaching and grandiose dreams but also certain basic doubts and fears. In one form or another the question comes to each individual, "Am I normal?" This means first of all, "Am I regular, like other people, or at least like those who are all right? Is there anything wrong with me physically, with my appearance, or as a male, as a female?" More alarmingly, but more subtly, and harder to formu-

late, come doubts about one's own feelings, especially the conflicting feelings about those who have been closest. "Is it normal for me to hate—almost—the people whom I ought to love, whom I have loved—and still do, really?"

Boys and girls need the assurance that all this is normal. They need to feel, too, that they are being taken seriously by everybody around them—not solemnly or tragically, of course, nor with any great show of concern—but seriously, as adults deal with other adults, as man to man.

Strains Are Normal

We have always known that the transition from childhood to manhood and womanhood involves strains. It is only within these last few decades, however, that we have been facing more frankly the difficulties which these strains bring, to the parents as well as to the child. And we have been searching for better insight with which to manage our parent-child relationships during this transition period. Instead of hoping to find some happy detour, we are coming to realize that to attempt to skip this intermediate phase of development may have serious consequences.

Occasionally we hear a mother say "My daughter (or son) has gone through adolescence without any difficulty." I am tempted to ask such a mother: "What is wrong? Has there been too much domination? Has the young spirit been afraid to assert itself?" In the adolescent the desires and impulses and strength of a nearly mature person have to find their play and make their adjustments under the direction of a relatively ignorant, relatively inexperienced and awkward child. The parents' part in this is not to attempt to eliminate the unavoidable strains and stresses but to guard against the preventable aggravations due to ignorance and lack of understanding. This

is indeed the "storm and stress" period. We can prevent the storms but not the stresses.

During adolescence traits and dispositions sometimes appear with startling suddenness, but much of what now appears had its sources farther back. Trends which have been developing for a long time now reach the surface, coming into conflict with each other as well as with the demands and restrictions of the adult world. This is not to say that we must take to fatalism, but rather that we may find our knowledge of what has gone before helpful in dealing with present problems.

Melting Walls

What makes the period especially trying for many parents is the fact that, with the maturing of the children, the family drama escapes beyond the walls of the home. The adolescent comes into contact with increasing numbers of adults, both directly and vicariously—through books, the movies, and other means of communication. Thus he acquires new standards by which to measure the home, often to its disadvantage. This naturally arouses resentment on the part of the parents. At the same time the parents become sensitive to criticism of their children from outside as this reflects upon the adequacy of the home. They are more eager than ever to correct shortcomings in their handiwork. This is their very last chance to complete the training, perfect the character, of their offspring. If the adolescent is touchy, the parents are no less so. This inevitably means strains, which we are challenged to manage in the interests of all concerned.

Realignments Within the Home

But our management is further complicated by a kind of estrangement which seems to arise between parent and

child at this period. Ordinarily the daughter shows a disposition to become more resentful toward her mother, whereas the boy turns his dislikes toward the father. In each home, as we parents become aware that something strange is "coming over the child", we search our hearts for any blunders we may have committed. Perhaps we have not been patient enough or sufficiently interested in their doings or in their friends. We recall the obvious (and probably irrelevant) things that happened some time before each acute outbreak. We wonder whether we did wisely in denying the child something wanted or in requiring the performance of some unpleasant duty.

Whether or not we find satisfactory explanations for the growing estrangement—or at least tension—most of us are not likely to see very far into the adolescent's deeper emotional processes. The outer facts are clear enough. There is a definite hostility between the adolescent and the parent of the same sex. Several theories have attempted to account for these disturbing developments. One view is very simple and direct. At an earlier period the boy had identified himself with his father, as his model of the strong and brave and clever while, similarly, the little girl had found her model of beauty and wisdom and propriety in her mother. Now, however, the individual is trying to become a complete and self-contained person. The daughter resists following the model which her mother has been setting up for her and, by the same token, the boy turns from the father's pattern.

Another more subtle theory sees the adolescent's growing sexuality as the source of emotional tensions of a different sort. The boy, it is suggested, finds in the father a rival for the mother's affection and attention; and similarly, the girl—in her growing attachment to her father as the embodiment of maleness—unconsciously feels the

mother as a powerful competitor who places her at a hopeless disadvantage.

Whether we accept either—or neither—of these theories, it is clear that the rebellion derives from the deep emotional need of each person to become himself in his own way and it has implications for the individual's whole development. Those of us who have been working with many parents and their adolescents have found the second, more elusive theory a helpful working hypothesis. The way in which these strains are managed will determine to a large extent how these boys and girls and their parents will confront one another a few years later, when the children are adults and the parents themselves a little older.

Growth Itself Means Strains

It should help if we understand that these emotional strains arise in part from the physiological changes that are taking place in boys and girls at this time. Here too we have learned a great deal. Today we do not think of adolescence, as did former generations, as almost a disease—especially in the case of girls. But we do have to recognize that changes in the growth process, changes in the glandular balance, the uneven growth rates of various organs, all have their effect on the personality.

If the four wheels of an automobile should suddenly take on different rates of movement, independently of one another, we would expect surprising results to follow. It is not hard to understand, then, that as some of the bones or muscles of a child continue their growth more rapidly than others, the child's bearing might be altered, or his movements might become rather awkward. As a matter of observation, we can see changes in the proportions of the limbs and the head and the trunk. Even more important in their effects upon coordination

are changes in the proportions of the heart and the lungs and the other invisible organs. Underlying these changes and interacting with them are the alterations in the various "ductless glands" which affect not alone the growth of parts but the action of the nervous system and the whole complex of feelings.

Extensive experimentation, both clinical and in the laboratory, has enabled physicians to correct the excessive action of glands or to compensate for deficiencies. This type of treatment has resulted in arresting excessive growth and in stimulating retarded growth. However, such experiments should not be taken to promise very much for the immediate future.

The Family Drama

These are a few of the changes from within that come during adolescence and which operate in every individual, regardless of time and place. How these changes show in behavior is determined by the kind of home and society in which the young person lives. Every generation, every people, has had to deal with the universal struggle between old and young. The conflict may take different forms in Samoa and in England. It may create different problems for the same races at different times. But the family drama that accompanies the maturing process may be found in all times and among peoples everywhere.

Many of us are familiar with some of the emotional motifs of this family drama. We see a mother seeking in her son a duplicate of the lover who had through the years become the less interesting, and perhaps less interested, husband; we see a father seeking in his daughter what is perhaps not there, the image of what his fancy had seen in his own mother; we see parents everywhere hoping to relive or to fulfill their own lives through the

lives of their children, focussing upon their sons and daughters the conflicts growing out of their own social strivings, their money strivings, their love strivings, and, because of these, too often imposing upon their children false standards and impossible expectations. The resulting tensions and fixations are obstacles to normal growth from the earliest childhood years. But it is during adolescence that their effect becomes most apparent and serious.

We see, for example, a boy of twelve who has no interest in boys of his own age. He prefers to play with very young children or not to play at all. He takes refuge in reading and day-dreaming. The father, a robust, athletic, extravert type, is disgusted with what to him seem "babyish" tendencies in his boy, and disappointed with his lack of interest in athletic games. The mother, trying to shield her boy from his father's disapproval, withdraws him still further from reality, standing always between him and life. Here is a situation in which both father and mother, driven by their own emotional conflicts, are demanding of the boy at once too much and too little.

Parental Ambitions

Again, we see the results of unsatisfied parental ambition seeking expression through the children. An intelligent boy of seventeen, always a good student, from a family of outstanding social and financial success, suddenly begins to fail in his work during the last year of high school. This unexpected failure releases in the father a hostility born of outraged vanity, but in the son it may represent a dogged resistance, regardless of consequences, to the authority of the father. A family tradition has been violated; relations between father and son are strained almost to the breaking point, especially when the

boy finally refuses to attempt college entrance examinations. Only an understanding on the part of both father and son of the real issues involved can rescue such a boy from a life built upon conflict and hatred.

Or we see children unconsciously struggling against parental domination of their social choices. A girl of seventeen attending college in her home city is very uncommunicative at home about her outside activities and her friendships. Her parents, socially ambitious for their beautiful daughter, are deeply troubled because they do not know her companions; they are hurt because she offers them no share in her activities. She rarely brings her friends to her home and never invites her intimates to the elaborate parties which her mother arranges for her but in which she herself takes only a perfunctory interest. Inquiry reveals that this girl's tastes and interests differ widely from those of her parents. She will not bring her friends home to be criticized and judged by the parental standards which she knows to be so different from her own. These parents are widening the rift because they are unwilling to accept their child's friends and enjoyments on her terms—to recognize the fact that her social needs and drives have taken other directions and find expression in ways other than their own. By an intelligent understanding of her needs and also of the likelihood that these are temporary and shifting, these parents might help their daughter to a wholesome recognition of what is worth while and valid in their own strivings.

Society's Restrictions

Beyond the family setting there is the wider community which superimposes its demands at the same time that it serves some of the needs of the young people. So far as health care and formal schooling are concerned, the community serves our adolescents well. But how does it

serve them in their desire to be independent, to prove themselves in various ways, to feel secure and yet have a wide range of contacts with activities and with other adults? Here it serves them less well, if at all—for young people have less opportunity today than ever before in history to make a place for themselves and share in the important concerns of the world. We keep them in segregated age groups in school, in their play, and in camp. We restrict their contacts with adults and their opportunities to participate in community efforts are practically nil.

Most of our girls and boys today, even under favorable circumstances, live in homes that are completely devoid of any important activity in which they have a share. They live in homes that are run for them and go to schools that are organized for them and they know both home and school will go on running smoothly without their doing anything about it. If one would record the responsibilities that boys and girls have to take and the decisions they are called upon to make in the course of a week, the list would be startlingly meager. The mother who sees her boy off to high school well-provided, as she believes, with all he needs—a good breakfast, adequate clothing, his lunch and ten cents—feels that she is sending him to a fine privilege. Actually, everything in him is itching to be up and doing, to be using his hands, his body, his energies. For many boys and girls the years at high school represent nothing more than an endurance contest.

A truant officer in New York City tells us that never have there been so many truants in the high schools as today. Why should this be so, at a time when schools are better equipped and better served than ever, when most adults appreciate the value of higher education, when it is almost impossible for youngsters to find anything to do outside of school? It is because we have so far done

almost nothing to keep these young people seriously and satisfyingly occupied. We continue to keep them at the same kinds of tasks as their younger brothers and sisters. Their grandparents, at this same age, were clearing forests, running farms, building homes and carrying other man-sized responsibilities. An ever-increasing proportion of the high school population comes from homes that have but newly emerged into the privilege of using these educational opportunities at all, homes in which everybody worked, and worked hard, from sunrise to sunset.

Illusions of Freedom

Many of us and, indeed, many of the young people themselves enjoy the illusion that they have large freedom and opportunity because today there are so many things available for them to choose among. There are several shows or games which one can choose to attend. The variety of food and of furnishings and clothes makes it possible to assert preferences. But decisions that affect the comfort and welfare of the family, or even of the adolescent himself, or of his school group, are all made by others, for he shares neither in the authority nor in the responsibility.

Many children well on in the high school appear to be quite without initiative in everything except perhaps some of their personal friendships or games. The headmaster of a very good secondary school was astonished one day when a seventeen-year-old boy came to him with the statement, "My mother wants to know what subjects I will have to take in order to get into college." There was no indication that the boy himself cared to know or was in any way concerned; he had dutifully carried out his mother's wishes by going after the information she desired.

Excessive Protection

To suggest that the confusion and uncertainty which young people experience in these days come in part from an excess of consideration and coddling is no paradox. For it is characteristic of our times that we have eagerly used our expanding resources and our new understandings to shield our children from all the risks of this very risky business of living and that, in doing so, we have also excluded them from learning that business.

In parts of Colorado I have seen the men and women, whose parents pioneered across the trackless prairies and mountains holding their sons and daughters down to a completely conventionalized and monotonous—but perfectly safe—life that imitates as closely as possible the routines of the supposedly privileged classes in old communities. Men who had in their time managed buffaloes and landslides doubted anxiously whether their children and grandchildren could manage bicycles or should be trusted near the water before they learned to swim.

It is small wonder that so many of the young people have to find their excitement in Rah-rah Rallies. From being the sheltered generation they became the soft generation and they themselves derive their own greatest insecurity and dissatisfaction from being soft.

The very unreality of our school life artificially lengthens childhood. Our high schools and colleges, as a rule, present life under very select and sheltered conditions so that the young person, under the old excuse that he is being "prepared" for life, does not actually live in his own time and generation. He meets people, it is true, but they are cut to his measure and over-simplified. College life today, hardly less than high school life, is in this sense a retreat from the realities of living and is likely to delay the maturing process.

We must, then, even under what are apparently the

most favorable circumstances, guard constantly against the tendency to over-organize the environment of our children. Young people need now, as ever, their individual experiences in selecting and deciding, in judging and valuing, in initiating and terminating—in short, individual experiences in making mistakes, in succeeding and failing. At the same time, they need protection against fatal mistakes until they are mature enough to recognize the dangers and they need guidance toward experience that will discover to them the optimal values in themselves, in their neighbors, in their educational opportunities.

Need to Work

The problem, then, resolves itself, not into an issue between freedom and control, but into the discovery of ways whereby the adolescent may be projected into situations in which the stakes are real and the issues worthy of concern. Freedom he has—of a sort: freedom to play with ideas, freedom from real financial responsibilities, freedom from grinding toil. Nevertheless, it is also true that these boys and girls, especially those in high school and college, are appallingly unaware of alternatives, almost totally innocent of experience in the making of significant choices.

Children in the past received a very substantial and very important part of their education from the necessary work in which they participated. From the trivial fetching and carrying within the ability of even a toddler to the full weight of the adult's varied tasks and responsibilities, growth proceeded steadily in the life of each individual.

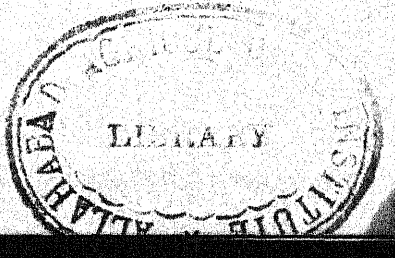
The most important outcomes of such work experiences were in the relationship they develop between older and younger. Incidental conversations, comments and suggestions had valuable by-products in developing character, in setting up standards and ideals.

Today the challenge is to find modern equivalents for these joint projects since they do not come normally out of our present way of living. We have to be aware constantly of the need of young people to take some part in what is going on around them. The home should be made the center from which various projects and excursions and adventures radiate. There are possibilities of all sorts which we do not recognize as opportunities, for the symbols and the framework in which we live have changed.

A boy of sixteen asked his parents to buy him an old car, telling them with enthusiasm that it was very cheap and just the kind of car he had always wanted. They refused to get it for him, not because of the amount of money involved, but because they thought granting this request would be indulging the boy. A car owned by a sixteen-year-old evoked in them a picture of "a shiny sport model, gilded youth, irresponsibility". The boy next door bought that decrepit old car which then became the center of weeks of concentrated work. All the spare hours of both the boy and his father were absorbed happily, if sometimes arduously, in an effort to bring the wreck to life. That car turned out to be a good investment, even if its contribution to faster and more comfortable transportation was negligible, for father and son had here a mutual "job".

Need to Share

There is need too for parents to be more communicative about their own interests and their own activities. Even high school students generally, in the cities, have but the vaguest ideas as to their fathers' occupations in terms of the processes involved, of the social significance of the work, or even of its worries. Conversely, it is of course true that parents know very little about the ac-


LIBRARY

tivities of their adolescent boys and girls. We are interested in school reports, we listen more or less attentively to reports on athletics, we may even attend school plays or the big games. But there is very little of that day by day interchange of enthusiasms and comment and gossip that go with living together among people who care for one another.

To an extent it is natural for adolescents to draw off for their interests and amusements into groups of their own age and we may accept this without reproaching the young people for neglecting us. But we have allowed the age segregation to go too far in other directions, not only in home activities, but in schools and churches too. There are still many occasions on which younger and older could have parties together and these joint affairs have distinct values. Two families I know, one in New York and one in a southern city, have these unusual parties; everyone who is invited makes a great effort to attend and some even ask for invitations for their friends. The people who come are from many different social groups but the most apparent variety is in their ages. They find it much easier than they had ever suspected to talk and to play with those considerably younger or older than themselves. What's more, they find that it's fun.

Codes and Customs

To the normal strains of adolescence our culture has added certain new ones. Chief among these, perhaps, is the utter confusion of customs and sanctions among which our young people find themselves. The home no longer represents the final authority to which young people turn. At the same time they are for longer and longer periods dependent upon that home which has lost its authoritative status. Nor can they find security in the codes and sanc-

tions formulated by the church or the school—for these present no uniformity, no consistency, no certainty.

Changing customs bring with them a confusion of values; they cast doubt upon our former certainties as to right and wrong, as in matters of smoking or cosmetics, of recreation or suitable hours. A fourteen-year-old high school miss considers it unfair that she alone of her group is obliged to leave parties at eleven o'clock. She would rather stay away from some parties than be made conspicuous by leaving early. The mother talks about considerations of health, the need of conserving strength for school work; but underneath is her persistent feeling that the midnight hour is mysteriously related to the decencies and proprieties.

In working with a group of high school girls in their junior and senior years, I had them fill out an anonymous questionnaire. Most of their complaints had to do with rules and restrictions regarding such questions as smoking, drinking, hours and allowances. They felt they were old enough to manage their own lives and that they needed no controls. When asked their opinions about fourteen- and fifteen-year-old girls, however, they felt these others should have a great many rules. By working with this group and talking over their problems, I was able to make them see that they too needed some restrictions, that they, as well as their younger sisters, must get their freedom gradually. At the same time their parents needed to learn that the necessary rules had best be arrived at mutually, through discussion, and not through arbitrary pronouncements.

For the adolescent it is painful to be compelled to violate the customs of the group. Questions of time and place are not, in themselves, questions of decency or health; they are questions of custom and convenience. Twelve o'clock is as right and proper in one setting as

ten o'clock is in another. Considerate parents will avoid arbitrary limitations upon the customs of the new generation. Instead of declaring, "Never after ten o'clock!" they will evaluate each situation on its own merits. They will get the cooperation of the young people themselves in deciding what is best in the circumstances, all things considered, thus showing in action how decisions are reached in new situations.

James Lee Ellenwood, author of *There's No Place Like Home,* tells us that he had been wondering for a long time what he would do with himself when his three little girls grew up if all three should be receiving company some evening at the same time. When the time finally came it was no problem at all. At the hour when the first young gentleman arrived Mr. Ellenwood was safely tucked in bed. Hours and customs had changed since he himself had gone a-courting.

In so far as we parents can adapt ourselves to such changing conditions and customs, thus making it clear to the children that we are trying to be sympathetic and cooperative, they will be likely to accept restrictions where, in our judgment, these seem necessary.

Responsible Direction

Trying to be reasonable and considerate means much more, of course, than letting them have their own way. A girl of thirteen in the company of adults one evening asked for a cigarette which she smoked ostentatiously for the general notice. There was mild amusement and the incident was repeated on subsequent occasions. The mother did not at all approve but felt that in such matters the child must have her freedom and that the parent had no right to impose her "prejudices". The mother saw no choice except one between "freedom" and repression.

A child of thirteen is in no position to determine his standards by himself and is entitled to help from his parents. But the parents must be clear as to their own reasons for condemning or for sanctioning. Is the objection to smoking or to lipstick a matter of health or one of good taste? Is it a question of what other people will think or of a strong bias derived from early association?

Parents are not called upon simply to order, or even to advise. We need to scrutinize *with* the children the issues that present themselves, by asking, and thus teaching the young people to ask, the significant questions. What do we really wish to achieve? What are the valid considerations in deciding such a question? What are the probable future costs of our immediate satisfactions? What decisions are likely to lead to enduring values? The young people need a chance to share in the making of these decisions, not merely in the benefits or protection derived from decisions made by others.

This does not mean, of course, that we must ask young people to believe that we operate at their level—that our judgments and opinions and reactions are no more mature than their own. Two women were discussing a mutual friend, admiring her youthful spirit. One of them said, "It's perfectly wonderful; she's just as excited about her daughter's applying to Vassar and just as nervous about her getting in as is Katharine herself," "That's all very well," the friend replied, "but supposing Katharine doesn't get in. She will be just as let down as Katharine who will then feel doubly disappointed." Adolescent boys and girls do not want their parents to be pals. They want them young enough to talk to but old enough to turn to.

For no matter how much these young people strive to free themselves, they do not want to be left altogether on their own. They still value counsel and guidance and insight, the advantages of the greater experience that years

bring. If we accept the rebellion as a necessary part of the growing-up process, we shall recognize that while they turn their guns and their venom against us, they are fighting also against the fear of insecurity, of being left upon their own resources.

No Shortcuts to Maturity

The adolescent period is often described as the time for the severing of parental bonds and all primitive peoples have built up ceremonies in which the liberation is symbolically enacted. Psychologically, however, the fallacy lies in assuming that the detachment of the child from the parent is a specific act that can take place on a given day. Unlike birth, this separation, which is as much a weaning for the parent as it is for the child, should be expected to continue normally over a period of years. Indeed, it is a continuous process from infancy on. The weaning of the child from the mother's breast, learning to sleep alone, learning to walk without holding a hand, learning to cross a street or to go to school alone, these are all steps in the long road that takes the child farther from his dependence upon the parents but that may lead eventually, by a roundabout path, to a mature relation of renewed intimacy with them.

Far into adulthood the adolescent of today is bound, not to the parental apronstrings, perhaps, but to the pursestring. With greater freedom of relationships between the sexes, and hence greater stimulation toward sexual expression, young men and women are yet forced to delay marriage, home, children and the rights and responsibilities of founding their own families.

While we have been keeping our children young, dependent upon their elders and without responsibilities, they have grown at least physically mature. Whatever our customs and the law may say, they are, from the biological

point of view, men and women. They have already the feelings and appetites of adults; they have the desire to assert themselves as independent persons; they feel the inclination to initiate things on their own account; yet they are compelled to remain children in action and in their relation to others.

What Adolescents Need

They are insecure, uncomfortable and restless because they need to assure themselves that they are real people, that they belong, that they amount to something. And they need to prove themselves in the eyes of others, to make a place for themselves in the esteem of their friends and of their parents and of their parents' contemporaries.

Then why don't they prove themselves? Why don't they show what they can do? The road has been barred on the old frontiers and their eyes have not yet opened on the new. To the young people the world seems over-organized, so that there is no loose end at which to take hold. They cannot see the modern equivalents of such tasks as were perfectly obvious in the past: clearing the timber, removing the rocks, digging a well, laying out a path. In most communities all this has been done, and well done. In this very orderly world all the "opportunities," all the jobs, seem to be obscurely tucked into some very complex organization of machinery, workers, routines and management, the doors to which, leading from the employment office, are all closed.

And this highly organized world which the adolescent faces seems at the same time to be totally disjointed. Brought up to believe that in our excellent system there is a niche for everybody, he sees only niches that are already filled, or else a few so odd in shape that there is no hope of his ever fitting into one. What is most disconcerting, however, is that nobody can tell him why he, in particular,

does not fit. So he feels insecure because he knows neither what is expected of him nor what he may expect of the world that lies ahead.

But there is hope for the present generation in its demand for realism. The adolescent does not demand a magic panacea, nor a clear road to Utopia. He demands only that the adults around him assume an attitude of alert readiness to face the facts and a willingness to adapt themselves to a changing world. Perhaps these adolescents will retain that readiness and adaptiveness as they themselves become full-grown adults. And yet, in the absence of any widespread cohesive philosophy today, the insecurity of young people makes them especially susceptible, as we have seen in other countries, to the call of any absolute that is shouted loud enough and that promises the millennium over night.

Those who have had experience with the youth of the present time have been impressed with their capacities and potentialities and resourcefulness. How can these powers and talents be used, how can they be given a chance to operate? What can we anticipate for the younger children who will in a few years constitute the youth problem? We have to recognize that the essential needs are for an inner security, for self-confidence, for recognition, for identification with the adult world of affairs. These inner needs cannot be met by good words, nor by the kinds of protecting and providing we have hitherto attempted. They can be met only by actual experience with the people and with the concrete realities among which each young person has to live. No matter how much schooling has been absorbed, no matter how well the boys and girls may have acquitted themselves, there can be no satisfaction until there has been a chance to manifest competence in the activities and achievements that distinguish grown-ups.

Possibilities for New Patterns

The adolescent needs the experience of working with adults as a way of learning how to live with adults in the daily situations and relationships of genuine work. He needs the opportunity to find out what his capacities are in terms of the actual work that is being done in the world. This requires more than vocational aptitude tests can reveal, more than the usual "vocational guidance" attempts, for an inseparable part of any "work" is the human setting in which that work is being done. The adolescent needs the opportunity to demonstrate his worth as a member of the working community, not merely as a clever performer of specialized stunts on the playing-field, or as a maker of exhibition pieces in formal contests. He needs the opportunity to produce and create in terms that the workaday world will recognize.

The young people who are out of school (as well as a large proportion of those who are in school simply because nobody knows what else to do with them) obviously need a chance to do productive work and to build their own homes. While our affairs are so interwoven that the most rugged of individualists is quite helpless when left to himself, we cannot be satisfied to wait until "industry" is ready to employ them. We cannot wait until the government finds a formula. In every home, in every community, in every school or other common agency, it is necessary to begin with whatever lies at hand—whether of materials or of talents. In every situation we have to meet the pressing needs of the adolescent boys and girls with such resources as are present.

Many schools in different parts of the country have made tentative experiments in relating the young people's programs to the realities of daily life. There have been many gropings and fumblings but these experiments are encouraging and promising, if only because they indicate

an awareness among increasing numbers of school people of what is essential and real. You will find union schools in the country in which the older boys drive the school buses to collect and return the younger children. There are schools in which the children get their shop-work experience by doing the needed work of maintaining the school plant and equipment. "Self-government" is an old story in schools, with all sorts of bizarre imitations of the cops-and-robbers philosophy of life and government but also—in many cases—with excellent variations in the day-by-day managing of a hundred necessary details that do not look like government at all—from patrolling the traffic to conducting the library loan service.

From actual experience we can see endless possibilities for engaging the boys and girls of high school age in useful work without waiting for employers who are willing to cooperate. The superintendent of schools in a suburban community of commuters and factory workers drew all the students into a comprehensive program of real work connected with running the school plant. Everybody took part. The work was genuine and had to do with actual office detail and mechanical services. It included the management of the lunchroom and athletic and other recreational affairs. It extended to the cooperative running of classrooms and laboratories, of library and assembly. The boys and girls took their work quite as seriously as their "lessons" and often put in extra time to complete tasks on hand. One day the social worker from an institution for delinquents told the superintendent, "Do you realize that we haven't had a single behavior case from your town for a year? You are putting me out of a job."

Rearing for Responsibility

It is not protection that the young people want to make them feel secure—whether against economic need and un-

certainty or against other dangers. They would rather venture any risks than remain indefinitely in the status of dependents. What they want—and urgently—is a chance to grow up into responsible men and women.

This emergency of youth extends beyond any solutions that business can find. It calls for imagination and courage and inventiveness of a new order. Young people, in increasing numbers, are today more ready to face their real and lasting needs, and to make plans accordingly. It is this very process, now going on, that causes the consternation of older folks. Young people are thinking out new solutions for the need to establish their own homes, to free themselves from dependence upon their parents, to assert themselves as personalities. Many of the experiments are failures, many are even disastrous, but they are the only alternatives to abject submission—which is even more disastrous.

The present situation of millions of young people is really part of the greater problem of organizing our lives in relation to what we consider important, instead of letting it be organized for us by the admirable inventions of the technicians and managers. How can we organize our work, our whole lives, so as to insure a chance to live *with* our children at every age, not merely *for* them? For that is what they need and what we need too.

Our Common Concern

We have, of course, greatly improved the physical health and grace of our adolescents and we have enlarged vastly their education and their recreational opportunities. But we will have to find a way of bringing the young people actively into the practical affairs of life, as persons who share in our common culture, each in his own right. Today, the totalitarian nations are systematically serving the needs of youth by utilizing their energies and

enthusiasms to further common ends but they are doing so through forms of regimentation and indoctrination that violate what we consider human essentials. Yet nothing is more important for democratic nations than systematic efforts to meet those needs.

Certainly no civilization can endure that puts its young people on ice against a possible future need for them. We cannot treat our youth as if they were merely a reserve army, waiting, waiting, waiting. We, the parents, have the most important stakes in what happens to our civilization. We must awake to the fact that we constitute the great majority of the adults. To whatever extent we have the power to make or to influence public thinking and public policy, we have also the responsibility to direct sentiment and action in the interest of all the children.

VII

LEARNING THE USES OF MONEY

Money is a modern tool which all children must learn to use. In the family of but a few generations ago very little money was handled in the course of a year and managing that little was usually the business of the head of the household. But today, more and more the family's activities take place outside the home—especially the earning and the spending—and each member of the family must handle some part of the family's cash.

The child has to learn how to use money for modern living just as he has to learn how to cross the street in a maze of modern traffic or how to tune in a radio. Parents and teachers, however, find it more difficult to teach the child about money than about most other common things. We have certain traditions about money which make it impossible to approach this subject in an objective mood. For reasons that stretch back past the memories and the intentions of those living, money is to all of us a beloved enemy. It is a symbol of power, of which we never have enough, and of which most other people seem to have more. When it is being spent, money becomes a means of self-assertion but because of our limited resources, it is a constant reminder of our frustration. In community life, money becomes a measure of worth and for most of us self-esteem suffers.

It is no wonder then that we suffer from what we might

call a special "money mood" and that we separate money from the rest of the child's education, sensing in it potential danger and attaching to it peculiar moral significance.

Spending Before Earning

The first stumbling block in approaching the educational task is our tradition that one must not spend money until he has earned it. Yet obviously such a maxim cannot hold for children in our society as it is constituted today. We have already brought up a whole generation of boys and girls who had to be educated as buyers, who had to learn to spend, without ever having had any genuine experience in earning. Whether or not we believe that this is desirable, we must accept the actual situation and proceed to educate our children on that basis.

We would not think of withholding from a child the necessities of life until he has earned them: food and shelter, clothes and education, toys and books. We have always granted the child his needs as a matter of course. Why, then should money be made an exception? Parents and teachers must recognize that today money is very much the same kind of necessity and they must help the child learn to use this modern tool objectively.

It may be argued that the child does not *need* money, since all the necessities of life are supplied him. But this argument ignores the important fact that money is a part of the environment in which the modern child lives and breathes. In most homes today the child sees money early and often. Even a three-year-old will have noticed that the adults around him are very much concerned with certain pieces of green paper and certain round discs of various sizes and weights. He sees these precious pieces exchanged between them with solemn faces. Later he becomes aware that desirable goods may be obtained in such

exchanges—a round disc is exchanged for an ice-cream cone, a ride on the bus, or a toy. He learns very early that money is important.

Contacts with Money Inevitable

Even if we could protect our children from our preoccupation and concern with money, we could not keep them in ignorance. There are, for example, visitors who, with the best intentions but with little ingenuity in entertaining the young, offer the child odd pennies—for being cute, or for not being a nuisance. They give him coins and he finds it fun to jingle them or just to handle them. Soon he discovers—again from the attitudes of adults—that certain of these coins are more important—more valued—than others. And so, whether we will it so or not, he comes to an acquaintance with money.

At first he will probably handle the coins much as he does any other toy. He will arrange them in piles or in rows. He will scatter them about. He will even lose them. Then he will discover that these shiny bits are different—to us, at least—from other shiny bits. We are not overly upset when he loses his ball or his toy fireman's badge. But when he loses coins we scold him roundly for being "careless with money."

Sooner or later we shall expect him to use money with understanding and not merely play with the symbols—just as we gradually accustom him to speak on a real telephone instead of on a toy replica. For this there is no fixed date; there is no set age for beginning; nor can any standard ritual be prescribed. We can only say that at about five or six most children will have become sufficiently interested in money to handle it themselves and sufficiently aware of one-two-three to know the difference between a few and many.

There are, however, great differences in this regard

both among children and among homes. The city child obviously comes into contact with money more often and at an earlier age than the country child. The younger children in a family will want money in hand at an earlier age than did the eldest child; his possession of "spending money" now sets an example of power to be emulated. Perhaps it is safe to say that the time to give children money-in-hand is when they can count and when they seem to understand what these transactions mean.

The Allowance

Since the child learns to do by doing, we can help him toward a practical acquaintance with money and its working by seeing that he has a regular supply. This "allowance" we must think of as an educational device, just as we think of other tools placed in the hands of the child before he is entirely capable of using them—pencils and hammers, needles and rakes. But many of us feel differently about money and money *is* different. The other things which the child gets may, indeed, be misused but after all there is a limit to what can be done with a toy or even with a small hammer. With money, what there is of it, the child has unlimited choices. This very fact is alarming. He may choose not only foolishly, but injuriously. We are afraid to trust him with this slight degree of freedom, this bit of discretion, for the outcome is beyond our own control. We are not ourselves altogether clear as to the place of money in life and we attach to it many conflicting emotions. Money, for most people, is hard to get, at least in sufficient amounts, therefore it should be used respectfully. Money confers power in a way that is quite peculiar and so much power in young hands may be dangerous.

These fears are traditional, dating back many generations. It is interesting to pick up the recorded minutes of

a parents' study group meeting in 1899 and find this discussion on the question of giving allowances to children:

> The physical and material wants of children are supplied by parents. An allowance of money is therefore a luxury and, as such, has a deteriorating influence. Whenever parents give children a certain sum of money at stated intervals children will very soon claim such an allowance as a right, whereas they should be permitted the use of money, not as a right, but as an indulgence on the parent's part.

And again we find:

> It was advocated that children come to their parents for whatever money they wish to spend, for in this way you can control and teach them to spend money judiciously, not, however, to exclude children from pocket money, for they will feel isolated from others who are supplied in that direction; only not make it a rule to give a fixed amount at a stated time.

And again:

> Children should earn their own spending money, thus teaching them the rewards of labor and the benefits of accumulation.

This is in striking contrast to our attitude of today. We believe that the child's allowance, like his supper or underwear, is his by virtue of being a member of the family. It is given him neither as largess nor as a reward for good behavior. It represents merely a small part of the cash that is ordinarily expended on him—a separable part which he is free to manipulate to suit himself, with the goal that in time he will manage all the cash items that concern him and that are separable from the general family expenses.

Cash for All Children

This point of view applies to most parents, no matter what the economic status of the family. Where there is

absolutely no money, where there is dire want, any such consideration is, of course, beside the point. But even in families that live very modestly, if any of the cash income is being spent on the child, he should have a chance to spend a little of it himself. When the mother of one such family was asked whether she gave her children an allowance, she replied indignantly, "That is only for rich people." The inquirer persisted however. "Don't you ever give the children pennies to spend?" Well, yes, the mother admitted that she did give them a few pennies now and then but, of course, it could not amount to anything. The friend then suggested that she keep track of the amount and the mother was astonished to discover that, by giving her children next to nothing again and again, she actually distributed some thirty-five cents a week. She could make this amount significant if she allotted it in a regular weekly amount for each child—fifteen cents for the oldest, twelve cents for the next and eight cents for the youngest. And it was enough to start the children learning to plan their own use of money.

The allowance, then, is not a favor, it is a responsibility. It is the kind of responsibility that is fun and that a child naturally welcomes gladly, unless it is presented as a solemn duty, to be undertaken by him for the good of his soul. If the child feels that his allowance is just another disciplinary device, to teach him the "value of money", he is likely to refuse the responsibility, preferring to ask for what he wants when he wants it. Occasionally children say that they don't want an allowance, observing that they can get more money from their parents without one. There need, however, be no such choice unless we parents force one. As a matter of sound relationships within the family, the handling of money by each member should be accepted as incidental to our present-day mode of living.

It is true, of course, that we sometimes call the money received by the child an "allowance" without much thought as to what it represents. A girl of twelve from a well-to-do family declared that she had no allowance now but was having horse-back riding instead. Of course horse-back riding has its values and it does involve money outlays but it is in no sense a substitute for an allowance.

Attitude Toward the Cash

If the child, as well as his parents, can think of the allowance as his very own cash in hand, with no strings or qualifications, he will be likely to handle it most advantageously, from an educational point of view. The mistakes which he will surely make in spending it will call for no apologies, except to himself. He will have a stake in putting his money to the best use. If, however, there is any uncertainty as to next week's allowance, he will do as hungry people are apt to do when they cannot count on the next meal—use what there is for all it is worth and leave the future to fate. He will learn to plan ahead only if the allowance comes regularly.

It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that parents should avoid confusing their relations with the child by tying to the pennies their own emotions or meanings that are irrelevant, so far as the child is concerned. For example, the allowance should not fluctuate with our annoyance or exuberance. It should not be invaded by our need to penalize the child for any acts of omission or of commission. The child's failures may be important for various reasons but they are not reckoned in terms of his allowance.

How Much?

How much is a fair allowance? Parents often ask this question and nobody can tell them the answer. It de-

pends on too many factors that only the parents can know or judge or control. How old is the child? How much experience has he had in handling money? What are the opportunities or needs to spend? What are other children in the family getting? What is the level of the family's regular expenditures? What are his companions spending? All of these factors may have a bearing upon the amount of the allowance for a particular child. There is no mathematical formula that will yield a universal answer. The amount has to be arbitrary to begin with, and it has to be adjusted from time to time by experimental groping. A boy at high school may need much more spending money than his sister who is still in grade school. A child in the country may have less need for money than his city cousin of the same age. There are also such variables as carfare and lunches and contributions and membership dues. What is important is that whatever portion of the allowance a child receives over and above any fixed or prescribed expenditures must be his very own—free and clear—to spend, to save, to give away, even to lose. That is the essence of the allowance.

Learning to Discriminate

A child of five or six years, in ordinary town or city surroundings, can probably use from a few pennies to ten cents a week. Even so small an amount, if received regularly, has definite educational possibilities. True, he may be tempted to squander all his small allowance on penny sweets. But children do recover from these early orgies, particularly if candy in adequate quantity is available at home. And if the child shares in selecting and buying the family supply of candy, he will soon turn his attention to the other temptations which the merchants' show-windows display alluringly to the young. Playthings and jimcracks

soon become more enticing than penny sweets, as the children learn that they are also more enduring.

There are always plenty of catch-penny devices to embarrass the child who comes to the shop with his limited resources to make a choice. It is a trial of the mother's patience to watch the hesitant child defer his decision and review all the possibilities—all those various sizes and shapes and colors and surprising tricks! But the decision made by the child is worth more than the whole stock in trade of the emporium. Almost invariably there will be regrets. He wishes now that he had taken the blue ball instead of the red or the one top instead of the five marbles. And with the regrets comes the resolution to be wiser next time. But it will take several next times to teach him what he really prefers, for one must try out a large number of satisfactions and disappointments to make suitable comparisons. The paper airplane, pretty as it was when new, did not last long; the flimsy game was soon broken or the parts dispersed. He wishes he had bought something more durable. At this stage, nothing can be returned; if there is to be better buying, it must come later.

Over many weeks a series of nickels or dimes can give a real experience in weighing values. The young spendthrift soon discovers that the most attractive offerings of the merchant call for two or three or even five nickels. Will that fifteen- or twenty-five-cent creation be forever beyond one's fond hopes? No; if one is willing to forego the ball or the paper dolls this week, it will be possible to buy the two-dime treasure next week. This is arithmetic, forbearance, thrift, hope deferred, projected imagination with delight of anticipation, all in one; it is sound educationally, economically, morally.

Graded Experience

It is in this simple way that we may expect the child's understanding of money to grow from the beginning, if we give him complete discretion and responsibility and if we grade the volume and range of his experience with his growth. As the child grows older he is able not only to manage larger sums, but also to plan over a longer period. Recognizing that the handling of his allowance is an "educational experience" for the child, parents sometimes feel guilty and think that they are somehow counteracting the value of this experience if they give their children any money besides the weekly stipend.

One father, writing about his allowance trouble in *The Parents' Magazine,* points out our confusion. His young son asked him for ten cents to go to a baseball game one Saturday afternoon and received the usual reply, "Why don't you use your allowance?" The boy explained that when the ball game was first announced the admission was to have been fifty cents and knowing that he couldn't afford to pay such an amount, he had spent his allowance earlier in the week. Now that the admission price had been reduced to ten cents he felt that it wasn't too much to ask his father for an extra dime. The father felt that it would be wrong to indulge the boy, that this was just the kind of item his allowance had been planned to cover, and the boy must learn a lesson. Being a kind-hearted father as well as a conscientious one, he felt very badly at having deprived his son of a delightful experience and made up for his sternness by treating him to an ice cream soda later in the afternoon. The soda cost twenty cents, the pleasure of drinking it lasted five minutes and, while it was duly appreciated, it didn't compare favorably with the fun of going to the ball game with the other fellows. The boy probably wondered (and he would have been right to do so) why his father

couldn't have "treated" him to the game in the same spirit that he had treated him to the soda.

From a weekly allowance of a few cents, growing gradually larger as he gets older, the boy or girl may arrive at a monthly allowance of increasing amounts, as he shows increasing skill in management.

It is desirable both to increase the child's allowance as resources permit and to extend the range of purchases over which he has complete control. This extension of his power to purchase not only increases his experiences in the use of money—in planning, in spending, in saving—but also adds to his personal satisfaction in his own growing power and responsibility. With due regard for variations among individuals and for special circumstances, we should expect a boy or girl to become capable of managing a comprehensive allowance between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years. This should cover practically all personal expenditures—clothing, amusements, furnishings, and incidentals.

Keeping Accounts

In order that children may learn to "manage" rather than merely to "spend" their allowances, parents often insist upon the keeping of accounts. For some parents, this is a way of making the child realize that the spending of money is a serious business or, perhaps, of making sure that having money does not appear "too easy". Having accepted the fact that the child cannot earn what he spends, they believe that he ought at least to account for his spending.

Learning to keep accounts is of course useful. Such learning should, however, come as incidental to the handling of money, a by-product of a varied experience in which it becomes important *to the spender* to know what happens to his money. It is not in itself a primary goal of

spending, nor should it be the price exacted from the child for the continuance of his allowance. We should at least avoid mixing the issues. We do *not* give the boy or girl an allowance in order to teach accounting but it may be well to give him a chance to learn accounting as a means of getting more for his money.

For children who are not "account-minded", the enforced keeping of accounts may result only in making the allowance a burden which is not worth the trouble it involves and it may discredit account-keeping in some cases in which it might otherwise be mastered. A child may manage his money very well and still be a poor accountant. Some children would rather not spend at all than have to account for every cent. Furthermore, keeping a written record does expose one to censorship. Perhaps if children were sure that the parents would never inspect the accounts it would come easier. At any rate, the important thing is that the child should know what he is getting for his money and what he is missing.

If the child spends every cent as it comes along, he will presently discover that he is indulging in trivialities and missing the bigger satisfactions, the more enduring values. As the need arises for an increase in the allowance the child will see some point in keeping a record of his expenditures—say for several weeks—in order to find out, or to point out to his parents, what the need is. Or, if he finds himself frequently short of funds, an offer of help is in order. We might then suggest that he keep a record of his spendings for a few weeks to see whether the amount is inadequate or whether he is not getting his money's worth. This should be done neither as a penalty nor as censorship: it is an experimental procedure; it is accounting in the interests of research. We must, however, be sure that we are genuinely interested in research and in

fair adjustment, rather than in teaching a purely financial lesson.

Looking at the problem from a strictly financial point of view, we parents may consider that the growing child is bound to make certain mistakes in the handling of money and that it is cheaper to pay for these mistakes during the early years than later on, when each unit costs more.

Saving

Waste is abhorrent to any orderly mind and thrift almost automatically commends itself as rational and worthy. There is, nevertheless, much confusion as to the place and meaning in modern life of the practice of "saving". Under the modern large-scale handling of production and consumption, the virtue and value of thrift are being challenged on all sides. Nearly every family in the country has suffered more or less directly, during the thirties, from the disorganization of our economy. In this drastic episode those who had not saved were left without any reserves at all, whereas many of those who had saved to the utmost found their savings completely wiped out. Many parents, however, probably out of sheer respect for tradition, still try to inculcate in their children a habit of saving and an appreciation of thrift. The usefulness of saving as a virtuous end in itself is, today, questionable teaching. Saving, to be understandable, must mean to the child a device for buying something that costs more than he has on hand. There is involved self-denial with a remote purpose.

From saving over a short period for a concrete object very much desired, we pass to saving over a longer period for a less specific purpose—the purchase of Christmas presents, or taking a trip. It is only later, perhaps in the early teens, that a child can adopt saving intelligently as

a policy in management and put aside reserve for rather remote and vaguely defined needs. Old-age security and the "rainy day" cannot have any meaning as motives for children's savings. But children do learn to project their desires into the future—to forego today's indulgences in order to gain a more expensive pleasure or to anticipate the possibility of a deferred pleasure not yet definitely formulated.

Learning to Save

Our whole civilization does of course depend upon "saving" in a broad sense. The individual also needs to learn how to live on less than the total income so as to build up reserves for various contingencies and emergencies. That is the nature of our kind of world. But parents hardly help the child in such learning if they make "saving" a ritual in which a portion of the income or receipts is mechanically set aside. For the child on an allowance, saving that is not in terms of the needs and purposes which he discovers for himself means either that he is getting more money than he can spend to good effect or that he is missing the education which the allowance is intended to help him acquire.

Too little money leaves no chance ever to save or to plan. Too much money may result in great "savings" but it gives no chance ever to discriminate, to defer purchases, to sacrifice a present for a later satisfaction—to learn the saving aspect of money-handling.

In learning to handle money, as in all learning, individual differences are apparent and here, as elsewhere, no procedure will guarantee the desired results in all children. We do not always know what it is that makes one child a spendthrift, another—perhaps in the same family—a thrifty hoarder. One child won't spend because nothing appeals to him enough to make him part with his

money. Another cannot save because everything appeals to him too much. To some boys and girls everything seen in the store or in the possession of a companion gives rise to an aching want. These children never seem to have enough money. There are others who find in money a useful means to popularity. Sometimes these differences, or rather extreme forms of meeting situations, are indicative of the child's temperamental needs or difficulties; sometimes they are symptomatic of deep-seated problems. It is usually more important to know *why* the child spends or saves than to count up how much money is involved. Excessive spending and excessive saving may be equally suggestive of some anxiety or insecurity for, in the traditional meaning of money, hoarding spells a reserve of power, whereas spending it is, in itself, a display of power.

Earning

Experience in spending and saving, however far it may be carried, cannot of itself complete this part of the child's education. It gives, at most, discrimination as to what money can buy. The child needs to discover further what money means in human effort and achievement and this he can learn only through his own experience of earning.

Modern organization of industry and the accompanying safeguards against child labor, however advantageous these may be, have also made it increasingly difficult to find genuine working and earning experiences for children. Today it is hard to discover useful work that children might do except in the home, where genuine earning is impossible, or in commercialized situations which expose them to unwholesome exploitation. There is now very little opportunity for children to earn money in ways and under conditions that we should consider satisfactory for them.

Pay for Home Work

The question is often asked, should children be paid for work they do in the home? Helping with the housework —washing dishes, sweeping and dusting, making up beds, removing snow or ashes, or looking after the furnace— presents itself as the most obvious, and it is in fact the most frequent, means of earning money among children not placed in industrial or commercial jobs. Selling or delivering newspapers at fixed hours, helping in shops, looking after younger children, mowing lawns and doing occasional errands of one sort or another, constitute the range of most opportunities available outside the home. Within recent years "baby sitting", covering the care of children of a wide range of ages, opened up a lucrative field for teen-agers. This can be valuable experience, if young people are properly prepared and guided.

This raises, however, another issue that is quite as important as the need to experience earning. Within the home it is necessary to carry on a great variety of activities for the comfort and convenience and well-being of all the members. Many of the tasks fall upon the mother because she is, in most homes, the houseworker as well as the household manager and home-maker. Whatever part of the household work can be done by other members of the family is not merely a relief for the mother, but a contribution to the welfare of the entire group. To place the odd jobs that the children can do on a pay basis sets up a false relation between the members of the cooperative enterprise that home-making represents. We expect children to wash dishes or dust the furniture because they are able and willing to share in the work of keeping the plant going. There is no thought of bargaining here any more than in the distribution of the benefits. The child gets his food, his shelter, his clothing, his recreation, his school and his social opportunities on a

basis unrelated to his contributions—the strong child and the weak, the industrious one and the lazy one, all share benefits in terms of their respective needs.

The one possible rule that seems applicable is this: *children may be paid for doing only that for which somebody else would otherwise be hired.* This leaves the child free to take the job or to leave it, without needing to apologize or to defend his action. If we pay him for doing work that we consider part of his duty, we place the transaction upon a false basis: for in the first place, people must not expect material compensation for doing their duty; and in the second place, when work is done for pay, the worker should be free to abandon it if the conditions no longer suit him.

Needed Experience

The adolescent, however, needs to experience *real earning,* as distinguished from being paid for merely nominal services. And he needs to experience the earning of real money, as distinguished from praise or blue ribbons or certificates of merit. Unless and until his achievement attains a form and a degree of competence that can be evaluated in terms of the prevailing mode of exchange, he can have no assurance that his performance in the shelter of the home or the school really qualifies him for a self-respecting place in the world of adults. And it is only when he is confident of his ability to maintain himself through his own efforts that he can accept further subsidies without feeling unduly dependent or unduly dominated.

The adolescent, needing to spend more than the young child, often becomes increasingly sensitive to the parents' emotions, which make it difficult to keep on taking. Many parents who have learned to accept the allowance as a matter of course when relatively small amounts were in-

volved, now become fearful—fearful of the power which they seem to be placing in such young hands when they give these older boys and girls enough money for a month's needs—often a considerable sum. "They don't yet know the value of money" we argue, "they have never learned how hard it is to earn these dollars." Furthermore we fear that they will be deluded by a false sense of independence. Our control over their comings and going derives from our hold upon the purse-strings. Earning therefore becomes urgent for the adolescent for spiritual, if not for economic, reasons.

The growing young person should be able to earn, and in relationships that do not involve the parents. If he is to acquire independence, he must be independent even to the point of finding remunerative work and of holding his job on his merits. That is one reason why we are increasingly demanding of such public agencies as schools that they not only guide and train girls and boys in their occupational prospects, but help to find work for them.

When young members of the family begin to earn money and still continue to live at home they often have the difficult question of deciding "how much to pay"—or rather to contribute. This is not easy. We are still too close to the time when the first earnings of boys and girls were considered by the employer as nominal stipends for apprentices and by the family as mere pin-money, a nominal supplement to the family income, barely sufficient in most cases for the incidental personal needs of the worker. The beginner is seldom self-supporting: he can seldom "pay" his share of the household costs and have enough left to supply his personal needs for clothes, recreation, personal development and so on. We must expect him to continue as a member of the family and contribute according to his ability, gradually liberating himself economically as well as intellectually and emotionally.

Values Money Cannot Buy

If, through his allowance, the child gets his education in relative values among things that can be purchased, he has to learn also that there are some values which money can neither measure nor buy. To pay a child a quarter for doing his arithmetic will teach him neither arithmetic nor the purchasing power of the quarter. To fine him for forgetting to put away his coat will accomplish little for his sense of order but it may seriously impair his management of an allowance subjected to such incalculable—and unwarranted—fluctuations.

Too many parents use the allowance not primarily as an instrument for educating the child with regard to money, but as an instrument of discipline, to purchase the child's obedience, or affection, or goodness. "If you don't bring in a better report card next time you will not get your allowance," or, "If you are late again I will fine you ten cents," and so on, in infinite variations.

Conversely, many parents—often the same parents—attempt to manipulate the allowance at the other end for purposes unrelated to the basic problem. "If you bring a better report I will add ten cents," or "Every time you take a nap you will get a nickel." There are endless temptations to use money rewards, in contrast to money penalties, for deeds or services or efforts that, within the family, should be without money and without price.

Still more confusing are those situations in which money does, indeed, play a role but in which it is difficult for the parents and practically impossible for the children to see just what that role is.

Paul had been presented with a bow and a quiver full of arrows on his birthday and after several days he was still enthusiastic. He carried his enthusiasm a little too far—indoors, in fact—and unfortunately shot one of the arrows into a valuable oil painting. Aside from universal

distress and Paul's chagrin, there was the problem of expert service for restoring the picture and that was expensive. Paul fell readily into the suggestion that he pay for the damage. That appeared to him as the easiest way to buy immunity from further reproach and, perhaps, from self-reproach too. The plan meant, however, a mortgage upon his allowance for some two years. That was a disproportionate burden for him to carry. The amount or the character of the damage bore no relation to the nature or seriousness of the offense. The same kind of "carelessness" or thoughtlessness might have resulted in a negligible scratch on the wallpaper—or in the permanent loss of somebody's eyesight. It was, furthermore, the kind of act which calls for a change in the child in terms of considerateness or caution, and this could hardly be brought about through the loss of his allowance.

Parents' Confusions

Even adults are often confused in their motives regarding money matters; we cannot expect clear understanding and decision from children. A boy of fourteen was eager to get into long trousers but his mother did not consider him quite ready. She told him that if he would look after the furnace she would pay him fifty cents a week and he could soon save up enough to buy the trousers himself. This arrangement was in effect barely two weeks when Sam came to his mother with a grievance. "It's a gyp, that's what it is! You would have to pay a man more than fifty cents a week to look after the furnace and then you would have to get me the long pants anyhow."

Of course the mother was at once aware that she had not made the bargain either for the purpose of saving money on the furnace or making the boy earn the money for the trousers. The inspiration for the plan came solely

from her desire to gain time and to defer as long as possible seeing her darling in long trousers. The issue was apparently as important for her as for her son, although in a different way.

Varying Scales of Value

It is important for parents to recognize the child's need for help in learning relative values. Certainly it is often necessary to interpret adult expenditures to a child if they are to seem reasonable. Many a time a girl or boy will want to buy something that is foolish enough but which, for the moment, catches his fancy or promises to satisfy something within him. But mother declares, "We cannot afford that paint box"—which may be perfectly true. When, a few minutes later, she spends three or four times that price for the family's meat, her sense of values may be sound but the child's sense of justice is outraged. "So much for meat which will soon be eaten up, and we cannot afford so little for that beautiful paint box which would be a joy forever!" The gap between these two scales of value must not be permitted to become a gap between two persons. The parent should at least let the child know that she is aware of the seeming inconsistency, and help him progressively to appreciate the values involved.

A girl of thirteen selected for herself a dress that cost fourteen dollars, which the mother insisted was too much for her to pay. "But," protested the girl, "you bought one for yourself last week for twenty-five dollars and thought it was a bargain!" Instead of feeling that this protest by the daughter is an impertinence, her mother needs to recognize that the challenge is perfectly legitimate—an invitation for guidance and interpretation. It is not always an easy matter to make clear that an older person must have a dress of better material, or better finish, or of

more refinement in detail; that the girl will need a greater variety of dresses each season and will outgrow them rapidly.

Sharing in Family Council

Whether the family's income be large or small, we must recognize that for the children, at least, it is almost impossible to reconcile the many unavoidable inconsistencies in our handling of money. It is a necessary part of the children's education to learn the grounds on which discriminations are made and the methods by which decisions are reached. It is, therefore, helpful to take them into council when budget problems are discussed, even if you know and they know that the final decision will not rest with them.

The various talents or handicaps of the different members of the family obviously call for adjustments. One child needs special schooling, braces for his teeth, or a particularly expensive diet. One is harder on his clothes than another. It is impossible to provide for every individual all that he wants, but it is possible to consider the best for all concerned—in view of the available funds. This is possible, that is, if the individuals have at heart their common welfare, if they are actuated by mutual consideration and affection.

Perhaps even younger children can understand that each individual's claim rests upon his membership in a joint enterprise. We can help them see the family principle operating in the community. Even out there, among strangers, people in distress or in want have to be cared for, whether they have been good, bad, or indifferent; while there are any resources, all will have something.

Attitudes Toward Money Values

With the rearrangement of the family pattern, new problems arise for which we are often unprepared.

Through changes in the family's income, we suddenly learn that our relationships have been too rigid to meet the demands of adjustment. We see, for example, a mother who has conscientiously studied the best ways of child guidance and striven to give her child all the advantage of her knowledge. Her daughter has had her own allowance and has been learning how to manage it. She has saved adequately and intelligently. She is ready now to join a special class in dancing, for which she has saved enough of "her own money". But during the months of saving something has happened to the family's resources. The girl's father has been unemployed for about a year. Although the family has not suffered actual want, it has sharply scaled down its expenditures. The girl is well aware of what has happened. She has learned to walk to save carfare. She has shared in other ways the new economies. Yet here she stands upon her "rights". The mother feels that her daughter's "rights" in the money saved from her own allowance are inviolate. The father feels that for her to join the dance group is quite out of keeping with the family's present scale of living. It is an extravagance, no matter whose money goes for it. The issue threatens to disrupt the family. This mother has learned her lesson too well—and also not quite well enough. There is something more important for her daughter than her "rights" in the matter. For the child's best interests lie in learning how to evaluate the entire situation in terms of the new conditions, rather than in sticking to the abstract principle of "doing what she likes with her own money".

It is in the family that the individual has to learn that we can never do what we like with our own in disregard of others and of circumstances. Even if this girl had earned this money by her own efforts, the best present interests of the family would still have to be considered.

She is a part of this group, for better or for worse; she has to share certain of its obligations and its limitations, as well as the advantages that it furnishes her.

Children often ask questions about money. They are curious to know how the family derives its income, to know its financial status and the significance of money in society at large. They need this orientation and we must try to answer their questions, but most of the information and most of the attitudes which they gather about money will come from observing and from living, rather than from being told. Not all that children learn about money can be taught through conversation or even by giving them a chance to handle money for themselves. They learn also from observing the financial affairs and attitudes of grown-ups. Here, as elsewhere, the fundamental attitudes are caught, not taught.

VIII

SEX EDUCATION TODAY

In our time, the attitudes of adults toward sex and sex education have made several sharp turns. From the traditional taboos and negations we had gone all the way to biological lectures for the young child, with candid pictures; and we had made many digressions in between. Now we are learning that our choice is not a simple one between tell-all and tell-nothing. We are even re-discovering the force and value of reticence.

It was proper at one time to assure young parents that most of their own emotional difficulties regarding sex had resulted from the famous conspiracy of silence under which *their* parents had brought them up. It was proper to help them overcome the fears and inhibitions that they had inherited from the past. And it seemed reasonable for them to hope that they could help their children to a saner outlook and to more satisfactory adjustments by imparting correct information concerning the facts of life and by discussing with them freely any and all matters relating to sex. Indeed, even in large sections of our population that had always resisted the mildest "progressivism" in education, such help seems to be today in growing demand.

This is characteristic of the traditional and persistent reliance upon education, or rather upon *teaching.* A study of 2000 adolescent boys in Catholic high schools

showed that in three-fourths of the families, the parents had not given their children "the early sex information to which they are entitled" because the parents "simply do not know how to broach the subject". This condition is of course quite general among all sections of our population, and for reasons that permit no reproach to anybody. Dr. Fleege* concludes that "the best way of making certain that our present adolescents will not find themselves in a similar plight when they become parents would be to instruct them now both as to the facts and the proper vocabulary".

Scattered through our population are men and women whose parents had hoped to use "the facts and the proper vocabularies" that they had somehow acquired so as to spare their children the emotional upheavals which had punctuated their own adolescence. But, as parents, many of them are sadly disappointed. They had learned valuable lessons about the maturing of youth and yet failed to reckon with the original nature of man—and woman —and especially with the continuing needs of adolescents.

Overcoming Curiosity

Many of the parents who set out so earnestly to enlighten their children had essentially the same attitudes as the much larger numbers who would have nothing to do with sex education. Both groups largely thought of sex as low and dangerous, as something to keep away from the minds and interests and feelings of children as long as possible. One group sought to maintain childish innocence by means of systematic and aggressive silence. The other sought the same ends by quenching the first sparks of curiosity with a deluge of the full truth about the facts of life. Both groups were largely bent upon unsexing the child.

* Urban H. Fleege, *Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Boy*, Milwaukee, 1945, pp. 274, 275.

Those who approved "sex education" apparently assumed that since silences had merely created fascinating mysteries without insuring innocence, direct and complete answers should destroy further curiosities. Certain educators actually advised, "In teaching science, we try to encourage further curiosity, but in teaching about sex, we should eliminate further concern."

It was pretty generally assumed that the very young child needed little more than a suitable vocabulary to enable him to speak decently about bodily organs and processes and that for the older child the job would be finished with some selected biological and physiological information. At that time there seemed to be some warrant for this view; so much of the confusion of adolescents and young adults appeared to be associated with ignorance or misinformation. What boys and girls in earlier cultures had learned about life and love from day-by-day living with older people—and perhaps with "nature" too—was no longer accessible to our children in their new kind of setting. We had already put "nature study" in the curriculum of the school because changes in our ways of life had made it virtually impossible for children to acquire a basic acquaintance with the world.

But while learning about nature, and specifically about life processes that have to do with reproduction and sex, is basic and necessary, we have tended to confuse these beginnings with all that must follow in the long process of sex education.

Perhaps the parents of the present and the future will find it helpful to see in retrospect the stages and the changes in point of view since "sex education" came to be openly accepted as an element in the intelligent guidance of children. We may at least discover some of the things not to do, some of the defects or pitfalls in recent experimentation—as well as something of what we may do.

Information Plus

Many men and women have grown into adulthood and parenthood since the beginning of the century, under what was during their childhood a modern regimen. And as they reflect upon their own sex education they find the purely informative treatment which they received quite unsatisfactory. First, they did not want and could not use so very much of the information that was thrown at them. Second, their parents had not been telling them what they most wanted to know. Finally, they could feel, though perhaps not understand, the negative attitude behind most of this teaching.

As we look back now, we can see that much of the sex education attempted by parents was the result of more than their conscious desire to meet the child's need for information and guidance. It served the less obvious purpose of relieving the conscience of the parents themselves —who continued to be almost as much frightened by sex as their parents had been before them, but who still felt that they should be doing something about it.

This uncomfortable feeling is for many parents so urgent that they eagerly grasp at anything which promises to finish the task quickly and finally. Hence they reach out for the simplest devices, replacing the stork legend with an equally plausible one about an egg hatching close to mother's heart, or placing in the hands of the child a book or pamphlet that will explain all—explain away, if possible.

The present generation of parents has a background of education that is largely intellectualistic. In general we still think of education in terms of information, of facts to be learned and remembered. We have, therefore, tended to assume that sex education consists essentially of answering children's questions.

Notwithstanding many disappointments and many mis-

takes, there can be no doubt that much has been gained in the past generation from our honest attempts to help our children with sex education and to be generally more candid about sex. The disappointments were, perhaps, related quite as much to our unwarranted expectations as to mistakes in our procedures. We are coming to understand that education involves much more than transmitting information and imposing rules. We have been slowly learning more about the role of the emotions in people's behavior and particularly in the process of learning.

Men and women of understanding have always recognized that neither sex behavior nor sex education is primarily a matter of knowledge, and that we cannot achieve our goals through talk alone. This view has been receiving increasing scientific support. The Kinsey* study, sticking close to the objective and claiming no special psychological insight, says as to "sex instruction":

> The so-called sex instruction which is given by parents and schools usually consists of a certain amount of information concerning the anatomy and mechanics of reproduction. As far as our present information goes, this has a minimum effect upon the development of patterns of sexual behavior, and, indeed, it may have no effect at all. Patterns of behavior are the products of attitudes, and attitudes may begin shaping long before the child has acquired very much, if any, factual information.

How a parent answers questions, the manner or the tone, is therefore quite as important as what he says.

Accepting Sex

Finally, we have had to change our approaches and procedures because we have been finding out more and

* Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1948, p. 443.

more about the nature of sex itself. Not alone from physicians and psychiatrists, but from the direct observations of parents and teachers, we have learned that sex plays a role in the individual's development from the very beginning. It is helpful to think of sex as a vital and integral part of the human personality, continuously developing as the body and mind mature, not as something alien that suddenly intrudes itself during puberty.

The most extreme and distinctive human achievements have been associated with the love between man and woman, which in turn derives from the sexual nature of the personality, as does the mother's devotion to and sacrifice for her children. Scientific studies have established beyond question that the processes which make one baby come into the world as a boy and another as a girl have been at work from the moment of conception. Sex differences, which normally increase in numbers and in degree, are not merely physical or chemical, but emotional as well. Before the child is old enough to ask questions about the sources of babies or about details of human anatomy, his spontaneous curiosities and his ability to "learn" already include emotional factors. Moreover, the questions that express the child's curiosities do not necessarily mean the same to the girl as to the boy.

We have considerable evidence that the rudiments of the infant's sexuality are involved from birth in the child's capacity for getting satisfactions and pleasure from all his sensual and motor experiences—for example, asking for food or drink, and releasing tensions during the emptying of his bowels or bladder. Both such physical activities and what the child "learns" contribute to the development of adult sexuality. The child identifies himself at an early stage with one of the two groups of adults he has come to recognize—the males and the

females. He discovers differences in behavior, in functions, in status within his own little world. He almost inevitably refers to himself whatever goes on around him —as to possible advantage or disadvantage, as to possible sources of pleasure or pain. And without any clear notion as to essential differences, he connects what he learns with its possible meaning to him, with relation to his own category of male or female.

Infantile Sexuality

Many adults trying hard to understand what is meant by "infantile sexuality" are confused because it is difficult to transfer to the activities and feelings of the infant what adults ordinarily associate with their own experience of "sex". They ask, "How can infants have sexual feelings when their physical development is still so immature?"

Sucking in the infant has been called sexual because it is one of the infant's chief ways of getting bodily pleasure from the food he takes, not only as it stills his hunger but also from the mere act of sucking. The baby's tendency to carry everything to his mouth, to suck or bite, is normal for the infant. The mouth continues to play a part in normal adult sexuality. Later on, as parents can observe, at two or thereabouts, the child becomes intensely interested in his excretory functions. Everything associated with them becomes the subject of jokes, sly remarks, secrets and the rest. Normal children of both sexes are likely to discover the possibility of pleasure connected with their genital organs and to experiment with them, long before puberty.

During infancy the child is characteristically helpless. He depends upon others for all his needs and for the satisfying of his desires. It is easy to understand that the mother becomes for most infants the "first love object".

She not only stills his hunger and removes physical discomforts; her cuddling and hugging add to the feeling of security. The mere contacts and warmth are sources of satisfaction. Those who have watched a baby during the first few months must have been impressed by the fact that it is the mother who arouses the child's pleasure most frequently and most violently.

Both boy babies and girl babies respond in this way to the mother, and both also respond differently to the father. The child discovers early, as has been said, that those around him are of two kinds and that he himself is more like one than the other. Unless something happens to change the child's attitudes or to block his development, it would seem that the individual will normally accept this basic fact of life and his or her own distinct role.

Today, nearly everybody has become familiar with the great variations among individuals. We have been learning to look upon differences both among individuals and among peoples as unavoidable from the nature of things. We do not so often assume that "different" must always mean better or worse, superior or inferior, higher or lower. Fewer and fewer persons feel it necessary to argue the "quality" of the sexes, in the sense of the old social controversies. We are therefore prepared to accept whatever differences there are and to give more serious thought to their subtler and more practical meanings. Human beings, like the members of other species, exist in two "forms"—male and female, all human beings.

The Beginnings of Education

The infant's earliest experiences lay the foundations for more direct and more explicit guidance later. The parents protect him and assure his needs, not only in terms of food and warmth and other physical conditions,

but on the emotional plane as well. They supply the child's need for affection as a basis of security and of confidence by their outward manifestations of love, by handling him and playing with him.

The affections or attachments which the child feels toward his parents are at the basis of his security; but they are also the means through which the parents influence all his attitudes. As parents we exert pressures upon the child or we encourage him, draw him out, whether or not we are always aware of what we are doing. We know of course that we are pleased with the child and with many of his ways or that some of his doings annoy us. So long as the child remains relatively helpless and docile, an adult can have fairly complete control. But when the child begins to grab and then to move about with both hands free, we realize the need to "teach him", although his education started long ago in his feelings.

The child's grasping and looking and touching and tasting are normal outcomes of his inner drives, in exactly the same sense as are his sucking at something placed in his mouth, his crying when hurt or hungry, his smiling when pleased. We have to accept them as the raw elements out of which everything of value in his personality will in time develop—as also will anything that turns out to be unlovely. The child is learning of the things around him and of his own body, as far as his senses can distinguish. And he is learning also something of people and their attitudes. He is learning to like or dislike as they do, to reach toward or shy from. It is in the first year or two that the child is usually impressed by the attitudes of adults toward the various natural processes of the body and toward the various organs. We encourage the child to explore and to learn the names of the arms and legs, the sense organs, the head. We approve eating, looking, hearing, smelling and have him learn names for these

experiences. But if we do not wish to impose upon him our own early embarrassments about the body and its functions, or if we do not wish to establish for the child that anxious gulf between the decent and the untouchable, we have to let him go on with his learning so that he becomes acquainted with, and learns, usable names for the genitals, the navel, the anus, and for the related processes.

Many parents are quite ready to be objective at this stage, recognizing that the child's attitudes are wholesome; but they find themselves blocked because they themselves know only "vulgar" or familial names. The remedy is comparatively simple. We can easily enough learn all the vocabulary we can possibly use. But there is really no objection to using the familial words. In due course the child will need a vocabulary for communicating with companions outside the nursery; then he will learn that there are other words, without, however, having to learn that *the things for which the words stand are wicked.*

Incidentally, there is no point in insisting upon a scientific vocabulary for the young child. That too often results in making a fetish of the words, and is likely to make matters difficult for him in dealing with children of his own age. The scientific vocabulary has the advantage, however, that it is as nearly as possible objective and unemotional, and that it permits the growing child to discuss with parents, teachers or companions on the basis of wanting to know or understand. Terms used generally by adults can be introduced gradually as the child grows older.

If we intend to guide the child toward a healthy sex adjustment we have to begin with him at this stage by accepting his own desires and feelings as normal and legitimate. Taboos and restrictions will in time be necessary. At this time it is necessary above all that the child

feel secure, having absolute confidence in his parents as always on his side, always helping him, always loving him.

Masturbation

In the course of his explorations the child will discover not only more and more of the structures and workings of his own body: he will discover also that he gets special pleasure from the contacts or the handling of the genitals; and he will be disposed to play with them again. Even when parents have freed themselves of the old horror tales about the straight road from masturbation to insanity, blindness and other terrible consequences, they remain perplexed as to what their responsibility is. The discussion of this subject in *Parents' Questions,* by the staff of the Child Study Association of America, should be helpful:

> Masturbation does not make people sick, or crazy, or impotent, as many of us were told when we were young. It is a very common practice in early childhood, as the child discovers the pleasant sensations he can get from his own body, and again at adolescence, as the youth struggles with a flood of sexual feelings and thoughts. It is so common, in fact, that some authorities believe it may actually serve a useful purpose in the child's development.
>
> Whether or not that is true, we do know that the physical act of masturbation is harmless but that guilty feelings about it can cause a great deal of trouble. We know too that for many reasons young children often feel guilty when they masturbate, even though their parents have not scolded or threatened or expressed disapproval in any conscious way. For this reason it is often necessary to reassure a youngster.
>
> You can tell by your child's manner whether he feels guilty when you see him masturbating. If so, you might find an opportunity to tell him simply that it is quite all right—many little boys do that. If he doesn't seem troubled or ashamed, don't say anything about it at all, and don't look disapproving or hurry to find something else for him to do. You might leave toys in his crib

at rest time so he won't get bored and restless, and try to see that he has plenty of fun and affection and vigorous play every day too. That won't prevent masturbation, but it will make it a great deal easier for the child to go on to other things.

As the child grows older, he should normally find himself absorbed in a variety of interests and activities. If the boy continues the practice, there is no danger of any physical or bodily injury. Nevertheless, he almost invariably develops a feeling of guilt, even if his parents or teachers never say anything about it. He learns without words how most people, or people to whom he looks up, regard the practice. To quote from *Parents' Questions* again:

> But under no circumstances should he be punished, or threatened, or told that he will get sick or that he is bad. That will only make it harder for him. The more worried and unhappy a child is, the more he is driven to masturbate.
>
> Most children don't seem to feel the need very much in their middle childhood years. If they do, constant masturbation may be one of many symptoms that the child needs help. It is *not* the basic cause of his trouble, as so many people used to think. But when a child of any age seems happy and outgoing and friendly, if he enjoys working and playing with other youngsters, then his parents do not need to be disturbed about his masturbation.

As the Kinsey investigators and other observers have reported, the amount of masturbation and its persistence among males vary among different sections of the population, according to the amount of education, religious and social backgrounds, and apparently also according to individual or personal characteristics that may be constitutional. Both the amount and the distribution of this practice among the various groups cannot be considered matters of "common knowledge" although whatever disrepute attaches to it varies from group to group. It seems significant, however, that the practice persists more

among boys and young men who have had *more* schooling and other social advantages.

This fact, and the parallel facts regarding homosexual practices and extramarital sex behavior as described in the Kinsey report, reveal a wide discrepancy between actual practices and what our laws and conventions assume to be the "normal" in sexual life.

Telling Too Much

When the child, commonly at about the age of three, asks the questions which formerly embarrassed parents, we have to answer him in a matter-of-fact way if we are to avoid attaching to the subject the discomforts and anxieties so generally prevalent. But we do not have to go to the opposite extreme and tell him more than he wants to know, more than he can understand. For this excessive objectivity, which eagerly elaborates information on the facts of life, is itself a manifestation of anxiety. More important for the child, is the fact that this procedure is in effect a digression, for it turns the child's attention from what interests him to something "harmless".

Many parents feel called upon to study special biological or physiological treatises in order to equip themselves to meet the child's questions. It is helpful for the adult to have some knowledge about the body and its workings and there are excellent books for background and vocabulary. However, every father and mother already knows enough, without waiting to consult a book, to answer the child's early questions about where babies come from, or about the functions of the visible bodily organs, or about the differences between the two sexes.

The child asks hundreds of questions, most of which we can answer casually, but without feeling disturbed, although we recognize that some of them are about im-

portant and serious problems. We answer in the light of our experience, perhaps with some moralizing, but seldom hold back because we feel that we must first look up a book. When a boy asks about automobiles, their variations in performance and price, the answer he gets is far short of an engineering treatise. It is even possible for the father to acknowledge frankly that he does not know the answer in some cases, without any emotional discomfort and without fear of belittling himself before his child.

One of the common difficulties of present-day parents is that when they resolve to be helpful in educating their children about sex, they feel that they have to deliver complete lectures. We seldom lecture on other subjects and yet we manage to transmit to our children our ideas and our feelings on almost every topic. What we do educationally is, as a rule, quite casual through our day-by-day living. It would, perhaps, be desirable to spend more time with our children. Perhaps they and we should then both learn more; for our real influence is exerted not so much through discourses or lectures as through incidental comments and suggestions, through answers to questions in rather short units, through exchange of gossip, anecdotes, and jokes.

Early Anxieties

It is clear then, that the basic problem is in the parent's own self-assurance, his own attitude toward sex. So long as the parent harbors any suspicion that sex is sinful or indecent, it will be impossible to meet the child on his own level of spontaneous and sincere concern with himself and his feelings. The problems that really trouble the child are not intellectual curiosities about the origin and evolution of sex differences among vertebrates, nor the relation of chromosomes to fertilization of the egg.

The child knows that he is different from those of the opposite sex and that may become a source of anxiety or of excitement.

We know now that many little boys worry about something happening to their penises; many little girls feel that they are deficient in some mysterious way because they lack this something that boys have. Both boys and girls have worried about being what they are—have had difficulties in accepting their respective roles as males and females. These emotional accompaniments of "curiosity" seldom come directly to the attention of parents. In recent decades, however, we have learned that they are so common that we may take them for granted. With this knowledge, parents are able not merely to avoid anxiety themselves when the child appears to be unduly concerned, but can help their children with confidence and understanding—which are, indeed, about all the assurance a child ordinarily needs.

The Stork or the Truth

When we answer the young child's questions, even in the simplest terms, we have to recognize that we are telling him a marvelous fairy-tale, something much harder for him to comprehend and accept than the stork story, or the myth about the doctor's black bag. For nothing is more fantastic, to the child, than the sober truth: the tiny speck smaller than a dot, growing up into himself, is too difficult to imagine; it is so far beyond his own experience. Why then do we insist upon this sober truth, which the child is likely enough to forget, which he cannot at any rate use, and which is at best meaningless?

Many parents have found that it is necessary to speak simply to the child, to try to gauge what we say to his interest and his comprehension; but it is even more important to retain his confidence for the future. No answer

can close the question. The whole subject is one of increasing interest and importance to the child. Sooner or later the facts come within the ken of the child and he must not be put in the position of wondering whether his parents have been protecting him or deceiving him. Both alternatives are too disturbing. It is better to come back to them repeatedly for more help than to come back with a reproach—perhaps not come back at all—because he had at one time been given a fairy-tale when he asked a serious question.

The Incurious Child

But how are we to retain this continuity of communication and confidence if the child simply shows no curiosity? There are children who ask no questions about anything. Such children are not necessarily stupid. They seem to absorb a great deal of information on many subjects through the backs of their heads. Parents sometimes discover that such a child has wide information about sex among other things—and yet has never "asked a question". The need, then, is not to make sure that the child has every bit of the precious knowledge, but that he remains on friendly speaking terms with his parents. The parent who is neither afraid nor over-eager can find opportunities to be helpful without waiting for the questions. Occasions constantly offer themselves: "Did you see how Tabby cares for her kittens? Did you never wonder where babies come from?"

There are also children who ask questions on a great variety of topics, but never about sex or reproduction. It would be a mistake to assume that the child's mind is therefore a sheer blank, that he has never felt interest or curiosity, that he is in a state of perfect "innocence." We may be sure, rather, that his interest, perhaps even his anxiety, about sex has made him reticent. It may be de-

sirable to open up a way for getting such a child to show what is on his mind—without prejudice, without eagerness, as in the case of the child who asks nothing. We need not assume that we always know what it is important for the child to learn on every subject; but here we can be sure of what the prevalent curiosities and needs are.

Sometimes parents are astonished and perhaps a little perplexed to have the child come again with an old question; he has forgotten something that had been told him years before. That should be considered an encouraging sign. It suggests that the child may still come to the parent for help, that the early answers did not close the subject—even if they were not altogether illuminating—and above all, did not shut off confidence in the parent. As a matter of fact most children require more than one telling. The facts are hard to understand and hard to accept and they often become tangled with the child's own fancies for a time.

The Child Grows Older

From about the fourth to the eighth year, little girls and boys are interested in brothers and sisters and in playmates of both sexes. The whole period is one of getting acquainted with the kinds of things and the kinds of persons there are in the world. During these years most boys and girls like all kinds of games and activities. They play together in mixed groups and appear outwardly indifferent to sex. The two sexes are accepted, just as father and mother are accepted, as being both more or less lovable, although different. It is apparent, however, that the child's attitude toward other children is gradually becoming differentiated along sex lines. There is, ordinarily, at this period a great deal of frank sex exploration and sex play, usually hidden from adults. Unfortu-

nately, if it is discovered, it is apt to be handled destructively.

Sex Play

A little girl of six had been playing with two companions of about her own age. Her mother—aware of an unusual silence—went out into the yard and found that the three children were in a parked sedan, all completely naked. She wrapped her daughter in a cover, sent the other children away, spanked the child, told her how terrible she had been and warned her never to play with those other bad children again. The last item was of course an impossible demand, even if it had been desirable, for we know that such play is normal among children at this stage, and that no instruction will prevent it.

When such an episode does occur, however, we feel that we have to do something about it. The children themselves, while acting quite spontaneously and without guile, are sufficiently sensitive to adult attitudes to feel that their conduct is not regular and they expect something to be done. How can we deal constructively and helpfully with a situation of this kind? What could this mother have done? She should, first of all, have been sufficiently prepared by her understanding of childhood to preserve a degree of equanimity that would enable her to carry on without manifestations of shock or horror. As calmly as possible, she might have said, "Come on, children, let's get dressed now." In the course of the dressing, she might have explained to them her point of view. After all, we are clothed most of the time. We do undress for bathing, or sometimes for playing in the sun, but at play otherwise we usually have clothes on. She needed to convey simply that she knew they understood that what they had done was out of keeping with the

customs of the land; she should not have made them feel that they had done something wicked.

Every child can absorb a few episodes of this kind without harm. If such conduct is continuous, however, it may indicate a pressing need in one or more of the children, or merely a lack of sufficiently absorbing play activities, especially during long vacations, when so many children are left to their own resources. In following up such an episode, the mother's concern would be to see that her own child had adequate opportunity to engage in varied and interesting occupations and that her curiosities were met more casually.

Nudity

There has been a disposition for parents here and there to depend upon nudity in the home to solve all of this problem of curiosity. It is probably desirable for the child to have opportunity to see the nude body of members of the opposite sex in a casual and normal way, as at bathing; but it is better for them to see younger children, or their own age mates, than adults. Where there are several children in the family there should be no problem. Some parents have taken this whole matter very seriously and have felt that their own exposure before the young child is in some way important. What is important is that parents be unself-conscious about their own bodies before the child. That comes more easily to some than to others; and we should not feel that we have to force ourselves.

For city children, there should be more opportunity to learn about the living world. The keeping of pets is desirable, but increasingly difficult in modern city homes. In school much can be done through the nature study of the grades. Various living forms can be kept in the classroom and excursions are helpful also. For older chil-

dren we should consider biological studies indispensable, whether in a separate course under that designation, or as part of more comprehensive units of instruction. We should require furthermore that the instruction normally include the entire life cycle of higher animals, as a matter of course.

Children's Curiosities

The exploratory interests and curiosities of children normally extend to problems of sex differences and their implications for conduct and for life. Some, however, have learned not to ask questions about sex and many children, in the country as well as in the city, grow up into adolescence with a determined exclusion from their minds of all such matters, because of early experiences that fix an emotional bias. Some gather a great amount of information from playmates and from casual bits overheard in the conversations of elders—as good a way as any, in general, except for the unfortunate fact that it is not adequate or reliable, and that it too often affects attitudes in ways which are far from desirable. There is also a great deal of guessing based on inferences drawn from what one sees and hears. The fact that the theories which children build up about sex and reproduction are impossible and fantastic does not make them incredible to them, and many girls and boys go right on to the marriageable age with the crudest substitutes for knowledge.

The child's inquiries and explorations, including the sex play, we may consider as having more behind it than the cool desire to increase one's knowledge. Nor is it merely a question of one coming to like some children more than others for there is much to indicate that the child eyes the opposite sex with special interest. It is not at all rare for small boys and girls to play at being "sweethearts,"

and more and more—as the years go on—feeling about boys comes to be different from the feeling about girls. The associations established by early home and community experience will persist and color attitudes for many years, often through life.

Sex Consciousness

A distinguished educator tells the story of his own childhood in a large family of a rural community. The family was very poor so he and his sister made their contribution by cleaning the meeting-house every Saturday. It was customary in this meeting-house for the men to sit on one side and the women on the other side of the middle aisle. When the two children came to their task, the boy cleaned the men's side and the girl the women's side; each was always very careful not to overstep the imaginary line—down the middle of the room—a sex-separating barrier that persisted and carried with it emotional elements well into maturity.

The amount of biological knowledge that goes with this period of childhood varies. Children living in the country, or attending suburban and small town schools where "nature study" is part of the routine discover with a minimum of difficulty that all living things are male and female. They may have an opportunity to observe sex behavior in birds and mammals and insects and, where there is opportunity to ask questions or to read, they can accumulate sound and balanced information. While this is not "sex education" it furnishes an almost indispensable basis for later clarification.

The questions which children ask about reproduction and sex do not always carry the emotional quality that adults associate with these topics. A little boy of six, who had been given all the information he could absorb, met his grandmother at the door of his home as he came from

school one afternoon. He was greeted with the happy news that he now had a little sister. He had known that a baby was expected, so the only addition to his knowledge consisted of the information that this was the day and that it was a sister rather than a brother. His first response to the glad tidings was the excited question, "Where is the cord?" The grandmother approved "sex education" for children, but she could not help feeling that this had gone too far. The normal response of the child, she felt, should have been some manifestation of solicitude for the mother and some curiosity about the infant. She could not help feeling that this curiosity about the cord was "morbid". It would not have been difficult to convince other members of the family that here was a case where sex education had been carried too far, perhaps to discourage the mother in her noble efforts. But even so unusual a response need not necessarily be considered as unwholesome, although it may call for further watching. In this particular case it appeared that the same concern about anatomical details extended beyond sex and reproduction. The boy came to see the same grandmother a few months later, after she had been shielded from visitors for weeks because of a heart attack. He carried with him a large book opened to a diagram of the human heart. This time his question was, "Granny, in which chamber of your heart did you have pain?" If this was morbid, it was at least not "sexy"; and the boy eventually became a physician.

Techniques

Recognizing the child's needs in this realm will not, of itself, enable us to deal with them, for we are ourselves men and women in whom these childish experiences left more or less permanent distortions and difficulties, purely emotional but very effective obstacles to free thinking and

free speaking. Even when we have learned the words, having taken the pains to acquaint ourselves with correct scientific terms and correct anatomical and physiological facts, the tongue will cleave to the roof of the mouth. We are driven by conscience to help the child and offer, with determination, a discourse that is thoroughly objective—that is, devoid of emotion—designed to displace the inaccurate pictures already present, that are misleading, or worse. The child wants knowledge, and it should of course be correct. But this kind of telling does not meet the child's need. In many cases it only adds to his confusion. What is needed is an opportunity for the child to do the telling. This is the important—and the difficult—part of sex education. It is helpful in two ways.

First, it is necessary, if we are thinking merely of information and understanding, for the parent or other adult to know what is in the child's mind, what his ideas are, what his curiosities are, what it is that he wants cleared up. He cannot tell us by merely asking questions; he does not know how to frame his questions. Open communication, however, would permit him to do more than ask; it would let him comment—and tell. He would tell what a companion had said or done, he would observe inconsistencies among the ideas of others, he would tell what he had always believed or supposed, and he would wonder at incongruities of conduct and doctrine. If, instead of attempting rigorously to divorce feeling from the subject of sex, we relaxed sufficiently to admit our own curiosities and our own amusement, we should get a better insight into the false or fantastic ideas in the child's mind, and be by so much better able to redirect his thinking. For our best instruction has to go into a mind that is already full of a miscellaneous assortment of ideas,

some of them worthless, and many of them colored by misgivings or anxieties.

The only way to find out what's on the child's mind is to "let him talk himself out". It is more important to listen than to tell. It's the only way we can get a hint of the order or chaos among his notions, suspicions, tag ends of old wives' tales or sheer misunderstanding. But there is a further reason why the counselor should hear more and say less. This has to do with the child's need to unburden himself. A good listener will not only discover the gaps and mis-connections in the child's views; he will also help the child discover that these anxious problems of his are not astonishing matters to the parent or mentor; people have such problems, there's nothing queer about him. It's important to know or understand and it's proper to wonder and to ask. The child's guilt feelings commonly arise from his own vague curiosities. There are feelings of guilt for wanting to know about things regarding which older folks are either silent, or else whisper in diverse ways; some are furtive, some giggle, some look wise, some appear menacing. We need to know what is on the child's mind, what's bothering him. This of course he cannot tell us didactically. He must be given a chance to get it off his chest, however, and this chance comes from the very act of talking freely. Rarely does the parent offer such a chance, for it would mean accepting the child's language—which is not only crude, but often "vulgar" or "disgusting"—and also the child's fantasies —which are also often out of harmony with what adults consider proper and decorous. If we could let ourselves accept and use the child's language, reenforcing and refining it perhaps by additions from our own as we clarify and enrich his ideas from our own resources, and do this on the basis of a common interest in something universal

and wonderful, we should meet these needs more lightly and more effectively.

Parents and Books

Parents often seek a compromise between their desire to help the children to a better understanding of various aspects of life and their feeling of incompetence to deal with the children directly. There is accordingly a strong temptation to resort to books which promise to solve the problem. Of course the parents can learn a great deal from such books, not only factual material and vocabulary, but a great deal too as to the child's ways of thinking and grasping. And certainly parents should make use of whatever such help they can get. As children learn to read with greater facility, we should expect them to resort to books for information that concerns them and it is just as reasonable to send children to books for information about sex in nature as for information on historical or geographical topics.

The book, however, is never a substitute for the parent and no book can ever "teach a child sex once and for all". Some parents expect the mere placing of a book in the child's hands to accomplish the task and they say in effect, "Here, Alice, is a book that will answer your questions completely, and better than I can do it. You will not have to bother to ask me. Good luck to you." They thus cut themselves off from further friendly and intimate and casual discourse and the relationship which makes it possible—more important and more valuable than any information. And whatever else a book may do, it cannot, in this field, help the child get his worries off his chest.

We must not assume from this that a wholesome relationship between parents and their sons and daughters implies a continual series of frank conversations. For it

is in the nature of youth to keep its own counsel, to be reserved and shy concerning its emotional experiences and to exchange its thoughts on its own level with its contemporaries. It is often not until years after an experience that one cares to talk about it—even to the most understanding of parents. It is important only to know that one *can*. Therein lies, perhaps, the greatest strength of what we believe to be our better ways of sex education: that the roads of communication are kept open between the elders and the youngsters, between the experienced and the experiencing.

Halfway Up

In the next stage, lasting into puberty, we find children becoming increasingly aware of sex differences. Each child would seem to be greatly concerned with his adequacy as a male, or as a female, eager to learn what it means to be manly, or feminine, both in the social sense and in the organic sense. That is, he has to find out what is expected of boys, or of girls, and also what his sex does, or does not do.

We might take the mutual antagonism which seems to exist between girls and boys of this age to mean only that the child is not sure enough of himself to deal comfortably with those mysterious strangers of the opposite sex —for the differences between girls and boys are increasing markedly. This antagonism may indicate, however, a deeper concern. While it looks like indifference, it is probably the very attraction of the opposite sex that makes the child play this game. Girls and boys are very busy being indifferent, and assuring their companions how superior their own group is to those others. Both boys and girls are disposed to show off, to bid for the attention of those unworthy others. Even the teasing and the hair-pulling are evidences of more than usual interest,

though we cannot always interpret them as manifestations of affection. Yet, when "sissy" is the worst insult that can be flung at a boy, he is not going to be seen playing on friendly terms with a girl. And with the girls there are corresponding feelings that force an affectation of indifference, or even contempt.

The Learner's State of Mind

All through this period there is a keen interest among girls and boys in the facts and processes related to sex. They absorb a vast amount of information, much of it erroneous, from one another and from all kinds of sources—except, usually, sources that are scientifically and socially reliable. While the interest is strong, and while the sentiments are increasingly disposed to favor the opposite sex, the sexual emotions, as experienced by adults, are still in the future. The conditions for learning, both from the intellectual and from the social point of view, are at their best. Our task remains a hard one, however, for the farther we get from the child's experience, the more difficult is it to describe and explain in a way that will give him ideas resembling those we have in mind. The whole field of reproduction, development and sex is very far from the child's experience, if not from his interest. Even on what is apparently a purely factual or scientific level it is almost impossible to avoid misunderstanding. And again, if we are to discover and correct any misunderstanding, we can do so only as the child freely reveals what puzzles him, what troubles him, or even what amuses him.

The Adolescent

Experience shows that where the adults themselves have sound attitudes it is comparatively easy to impart to school-age children a great deal of physiological and

biological knowledge about sex differences and about reproduction. As the child approaches puberty, however, new problems arise, and these must be anticipated. Boys as well as girls will in most cases have heard vague rumors about something happening to mothers and to women generally that is mysteriously hidden, although apparently not of the same order as the secrets about sex and reproduction. To many girls the unexpected appearance of blood with the first menstruation is alarming. The girls have to be informed that this experience is to be expected before long, that it is essentially normal rather than a state of being "unwell"—and that there are certain things to do about it. These are matters of comfort and convenience, principles of hygiene rather than anything medical. Similarly, the boy can be saved considerable worry about seminal emissions by being informed in advance. Where the boy is quite unprepared, the first experience frequently causes great anxiety, since it is so far from the usual that it suggests disease. There is in fact considerable exploitation of this anxiety by quacks.

We know that adolescent children are worried about these things, and indeed about many less important ones too. They must have help, but in certain matters they do not know which way to turn for help.

The leaders and teachers of these older boys and girls need to be helped to assimilate in their programs forms of activity and forms of teaching or guidance that bear a frank and direct relation to the fact that boys and girls normally become men and women. More and more indeed, the leaders and teachers in school are becoming aware of the need for orienting and informing and guiding the boys and girls with respect to the nature of sex and its place in life. And while relatively few men and women in these positions are now able to do anything

constructive, parents should encourage the training—or retraining—of teachers and leaders to fit them for this task. Often it is most helpful for parents to join in retraining themselves along with other adults who come into constant relation with the children.

The classical "adolescent" period when boys become more overtly aware of girls, and vice versa, is the one that has received the widest and most intensive concern of the elders because there are in it so many disconcerting manifestations—that is, disconcerting to the elders, as well as disturbing to the individual boy or girl. But underlying all the features of the adolescent's difficult adjustment is the perpetual anxiety as to sex, the anxiety of the parents and the anxiety of the adolescent himself.

Need for Personal Counsel

The idea that sex education is suitable for adolescents is more commonly accepted by the community because the difficulties of the young people become obvious. At this stage, however, the story of reproduction or the facts of life furnish merely a background—though a necessary one—for considering the deeper concerns. The more urgent problems have to do with social and personal adjustment, rather than with elementary curiosities which, at an earlier period, were relatively easy to satisfy with physiological information. Indeed, the more completely such information is available as a matter of course, the more freely do adolescents formulate their questions on a higher level of maturity. In progressive schools that do not defer life and its problems, the high school boys and girls typically put their questions in terms of social implications, and are reported to discuss with their teachers the right and wrong of petting, the regulation of prostitution, birth control and various aspects of divorce.

To those who have known the adolescent boys and girls, this is not at all surprising. We know that they have been concerned with these problems, and have been discussing them among themselves. What is new in our time is that these boys and girls can turn to their teachers, without hesitancy and without bravado, confident that their questions will be treated seriously and honestly, if not always as thoroughly and conclusively as they would like. We parents need to know that at certain points and in certain ways these outsiders have a definite contribution to make. The contribution of each depends upon his personal capacities and character and, if our children do turn to others, this is no reproach to us. In fact, turning to others for advice at this stage is an indication that the weaning process is taking its normal course. The boy or girl who continues to bring all his confidences to the parents at the present age is more likely to be a "problem" than the one who finds needed help in other persons. It is not necessary for us to assume that we will be able to serve in our own persons every detail of our adolescents' needs. Our responsibility is to recognize that they have a variety of needs and that we have to furnish them both the opportunity and the freedom to get help from others.

Whatever their background, adolescent boys and girls want to know what they can do to make themselves more attractive and acceptable to those of the opposite sex. Concern with health, where it is not itself morbid, has to do with attaining strength and beauty. Pearly teeth are more important than avoiding even a bad tooth-ache. Being able to dance without getting tired is more important than preserving the lungs or the heart to a good old age. How to behave at parties is important not so much because they are concerned with the conventions

but because they are concerned with being at ease, avoiding awkward moments.

Conventions and Manners

Incidentally, parents can be of great help if they themselves understand the place of conventions in life and are able to value them without treating them as if they were absolute and immutable moral requirements. Conventions are important, not in themselves, or as symbols of our belonging to the right set, but as devices to make it easier for people to get along together in situations that recur frequently. Like traffic rules, they help to avoid jams, collisions, interferences, delays, awkward moments of uncertainty. Adolescent boys and girls should learn the conventions but they can learn also the difference between what is "correct" and what is "right"—which are not necessarily the same.

Indifference to the opposite sex on the part of fifteen- or sixteen-year-olds is considered by many parents to be a desirable state of mind. Referring to his exceptionally pretty fifteen-year-old, one father told me proudly, "Susan hates parties. She's not interested in boys at all." On another occasion I heard a mother say in a tone of perfect contentment, "I don't mind Betty's going to a co-ed college next year. She gets along so nicely with boys—just the same as with girls." Her tone implied that Betty was a "nice girl" and it was probably this attitude (that silly, boy-crazy girls are *not* quite nice) that caused Betty to cover up her interest in boys—to hide it from her mother and even from herself.

Adolescent Misgivings

No matter how attractive the individual may be, he is likely to have misgivings. Every slight deviation from the average—in size, form, or coloring—is a possible source

of doubt or anxiety. With the most loving care we may be unable to change things, but with affection and confidence we can help the child to an acceptance of himself and encourage him to make the most of his assets.

As the adolescent becomes sensitive to sexual stimulation and increasingly interested in sex there is frequent diversion of the thought to romantic and even sexual fantasies and much of the dreaming takes the same forms. Parents should know that these things are normal and, in the ordinary course of events, something to be expected.

What then is the parent supposed to do with such knowledge? What is there to do? We do not assume that a better understanding of the young child's development will of itself prevent tantrums, or misconduct. We *do* assume, however, that such understanding affects the parent's own attitudes and feelings, and, eventually, the management of particular situations. In the same way, a better understanding of the adolescent may help us and the young people too. Knowledge cannot furnish complete protection against all difficulties and anxieties nor even against undesirable "experimenting". It cannot shut off the emotional and mental tensions that accompany growing up. Knowledge does, however, influence our attitudes and practices, especially where it is closely related to the feelings. It helps to ease some of the inevitable tensions, it relieves the parents of some anxieties and suspicions, and so helps to maintain an easier atmosphere in the home.

A Fundamental Transition

Adolescence is definitely a transition—a laying off of old interests and practices, and the taking on of new. We may think of it as the period which bridges the gap between the homo-sexual or self-sex interests and the

hetero-sexual or opposite-sex adjustment. At the gang age the girl cares more for other girls than she does either for boys or for her parents. This temporary preference for her own sex is quite normal. Similarly for the boys, liking boys better than girls for a time is rather to be expected now. It is the normal way of passing from the mother-loving and father-loving and self-loving of early childhood to other-loving. At adolescence, however, we expect the development to go further. Now intense interest in the opposite sex is in order; if the search for a mate is to be successful home ties must be weakened and homosexual satisfactions outgrown.

Recognizing these changes in the child, parents may be able to accept the implications in a more helpful spirit, and to guard especially against obstructing further development by using their children for their own fulfillment. A woman who has missed complete satisfaction in marriage or occupation or other interest is disposed to shower her affections upon an adolescent son and so clasp him firmly to herself, thus making more difficult his weaning. It is admirable to see a loving and dutiful son, but there is a point beyond which his duties and responsibilities must be turned in another direction if he is ever to live his own life. We have all seen situations where a girl seems unable to marry because it is impossible for her to find in any man the protection and indulgence she has been accustomed to get from her father. In some families, a brother or a sister sets up the model of an ideal man or ideal woman, making a satisfactory mate impossible to find.

There are other ways of interfering with the development of personalities during this transition from dependence upon the home, on the one hand, and the friends and intimates of the same sex on the other. (Too firm an attachment to one parent, through which the other parent



is excluded from his affection, is likely to obstruct the normal development.) Interference with the companionship that the child chooses for himself is likely to deprive him of the broadening experience necessary for his socialization. Keeping adolescent boys or girls segregated from those of the opposite sex may make their outgrowing of the homosexual stage more difficult and leave the individual incapable of adjusting himself to the opposite sex, whether in social and personal relations, or in sex and marriage.

One of the significant outcomes of the Kinsey studies is the high frequency of certain forms of sexual activity among young people in the supposedly favored social groups. Masturbation, homosexuality and "heavy petting" appear to increase as we go up the economic or educational scale. These practices, which are nowhere openly accepted as "normal," would seem to represent relatively immature forms of behavior. For we have been assuming that as the highly susceptible adolescent grows older, he will become progressively more interested in the opposite sex and also more discriminating among individuals of the opposite sex, as among people generally.

These studies suggest indeed that adolescent experience does influence individuals, but chiefly in the formation of social groupings and in adopting the behavior patterns of the group with which one identifies himself. We have of course long recognized the role of the group, from the close "gang" or fraternity to the church, profession, political party or nationality. And we have also seen how members of a family break asunder and go off into sets and ways of life differing from those of their homes and differing from one another. The Kinsey report emphasizes the influence of "public opinion" as a powerful factor in determining sexual behavior. This is just what parents have in mind when they say or think, "What

will the neighbors say!" That is certainly a powerful consideration.

But we have not sufficiently recognized that as the child grows up, the "neighbors" whose opinions and judgments are important for him are the companions of *his own choosing*, the people whom he can respect, those who "appeal" to him. This is a special phase of the child's *need to belong* and of the older person's efforts, often unconscious, to "keep up with the Joneses". We all choose our own Joneses: the younger person cannot accept the largely accidental neighbors as his permanent set, not always even the parents and playmates he did not choose. This is as hard for most parents to understand and to accept as the little boy in a recent cartoon, saying, "I don't want milk'n spinach! Why can't I have rickets like the other fellows?"

Adolescents don't want rickets: but they do want to belong, to feel the support of others who will take them as they are. They want to be like others—but not like "everybody", which is nobody at all. This need of the individual for social acceptance and for the regard of his fellows often turns him from the ways of his childhood or his ancestors. That may break older people's hearts: but it is in every generation the only possible route for millions of boys and girls; and the break usually comes during adolescence.

It is a sound sentiment that makes parents feel concerned about their children's associates. Children do "learn" from others more than the home or the school can be sure to counteract. But the solution, as the findings of the Kinsey studies suggest, is hardly in shielding our children from "undesirable companions". The protected group in an exclusive school will build up its own patterns, which will eventually exclude the parents. It might be more hopeful to look into what we can do to give as

many of our children's contemporaries a chance to become "desirable companions".

The diversity among "patterns of sexual behavior" cuts across all the traditional patterns that our population has brought into this country from the many nations and religions and philosophies of the past. We may say with some assurance that not one of the ancient systems is *the* right one for all of us today; but we cannot be so sure that any of the current patterns is altogether "wrong" for those who follow it. We can see forces at work that break up old ways. Among these is the postponement of marriage, for reasons that may be good in particular cases, but that in general do not regard sufficiently the physical needs of maturing young men and women; their spiritual need for independence and responsibility; their social need to find more congenial companionship.

Another factor that seems to block young people in their normal development toward adult sexuality is the very fear that has been intensified by "educational" efforts to impress upon young people the horrors of the venereal diseases, the tragedy of unwanted pregnancies, the wickedness of people not like ourselves who, under the drive of sex, do all sorts of unspeakable things. Under the circumstances, we should not be astonished that among those with *more* schooling some of the "bad habits" and practices are more common than among the poor folks who are classed at the lower end of the social scale.

We have encouraged our young people to learn all kinds of "knowledge" that is in good repute, but we have at the same time held them back from learning the emotional realities. These they need even more to understand and master, both for their well-being as individual

men and women and for their own fuller use of the social and cultural resources of which we are so proud.

Homosexuality

We can recognize in every male something of the feminine (a tenderness toward the helpless, for example) and in every female something of the masculine—as readiness to fight for loved ones. Mature men and women usually adjust themselves to mixed groups, to men alone or to women alone. And they are also capable of feeling affection of different degrees—and perhaps of different kinds—toward individuals of the same sex and also toward individuals of the opposite sex. In the growth of the child, however, the maturing personality and the maturing affections are so closely related that strange combinations become possible as a result of special experiences or conditions.

In some individuals—comparatively few in numbers—organic conditions make it impossible for the person to develop into a distinctly differentiated male or female. In a few selected cases, some medical help is possible. Since this hermaphroditic condition is present through nothing that anybody did or avoided, we have to accept it, like other natural defects, without bitterness or disparagement, and certainly without reproach.

In recent years the fact that many men and women are definitely homosexual in their habits has become widely familiar through discussions in literature and the drama. The fact many people are "like that" is coming to be tolerated and even accepted without prejudice; but little has been added to our understanding of the problem of homosexuality. The Kinsey report tells us that as a way of satisfying sex desire, homosexuality is much more widespread than had been recognized; but that the distribution of the practice in our population indicates defi-

nitely the effect of social factors. In parts of the population that are least restricted in their sexual activities, juvenile homosexuality tends to disappear: in the groups that are most restricted, homosexuality tends to persist longest.

Because of the pressures exerted upon them from various sources many boys and girls seem to cling to the comfort of their intimates of the same sex and to resist what should be the normal urge toward courtship and mating. A relation is continued that satisfies the need for companionship and affection, standing, by so much, in the way of development to the hetero-sexual stage. Though there may be no resort to so-called perverse practices for releasing the sex tensions, the adjustments—both socially and in relation to individuals—remain nevertheless on the "homosexual" level.

Crushes

It is perfectly normal for boys and girls to admire older persons of the same sex, and we actually encourage them ourselves to find worthy models for emulation. We hope that in biography and history and in outstanding contemporaries they will find worthy ideals to guide them in their own further growth. Such heroes are found also, however, in teachers and scout leaders and older companions, as well as in actors and athletes. In the course of a lifetime one hears of disastrous outcomes of such attachments; the older person takes undue advantage of the younger person's admiration, with tragic results. It is these unfortunate cases that receive all the attention, whereas the more numerous others, in which the consequences are indifferent, or altogether constructive, pass without notice.

Such occasional tragedies should not blind us to the young person's legitimate need for the guidance and leadership that is possible only through these very at-

tachments. Men and women who are truly mature can receive the adolescent's admiration—or even adoration —without exploiting it. If they are themselves sufficiently adjusted, they can be of tremendous help to him. For these reasons, parents have to know something of the persons who are in charge of their adolescent children, to be able to distinguish among adults those who are relatively free and mature from those who are themselves still dependent upon the adoration of immature associates for their self-esteem. But in evaluating the persons who may mean so much in the lives of our children, we must guard against possible jealousies or envies on our own part.

Parental Jealousies

We may be tempted to resent our children's preference for outsiders, or for persons whom we cannot ourselves admire. We may be especially sensitive, since at this very time the children are showing evidence of drawing away from us—their parents. We may then be tempted to belittle or disparage a counsellor or teacher. That other person no doubt has his shortcomings, even his faults. But parents might well accept these incomprehensible fascinations and treat their objects as allies rather than as rivals or enemies.

So important is the role of the teacher, the scout leader, the club director, of anyone working with the boys and girls at this stage, that we have to give special attention to his training. Increasingly it is recognized that these men and women need to understand young people better and also to understand more of family relationships and parent problems, for now the adolescent needs to be helped to see his home and his parents more objectively. At this stage the teacher or club leader is not an extension of the parent, as is the case during earlier

years. Now the adult guide is a friend and ally of the boy or girl. While not antagonistic to the parents, who continue to have their influence, their demands and their value for the youth, these guides help to liberate the young person from dependence upon the home—and from his antagonisms too.

Individual Guidance

Boys and girls are obliged to solve for themselves many problems on which they cannot get help from their parents but in which they still need guidance. These problems are common, yet cannot be met with any general rules, although we wish to uphold standards that apply universally. We cannot dismiss "petting," for example, with a simple Yes or No. Under various names, this practice of mutual sexual arousal has become widespread, and has apparently spread "downward" from the college and high-school group. With increasing numbers of young people being freed from the fears that formerly identified sex with sin, and freed also from close supervision, many carry their petting to the point of actual climax. At the same time, traditional restraints on "sex" remain effective, for the practice of petting is typically a device for arousing sexual desire and satisfaction without the forbidden intercourse. As the Kinsey report shows, where restrictions are least effective, "petting" is looked upon as a perversion. Boys and girls are eager for adult guidance and assistance in working out an acceptable code which meets their needs for courtship experience and heterosexual adjustment.

Whatever code is worked out for our culture in general, or for any social set, must take into account the tremendous variations among individuals. There are variations not only in the backgrounds of the boys and girls, the home assumptions and expectations, family

prides or pressures, but also in their own physical and emotional makeup. Some individuals have a greater aesthetic sensitivity, a more delicate discrimination between persons—some of whom are not congenial, if too close. The sensitivity may be social, leaving them incapable of promiscuous enjoyments, making them feel that petting involves an intimate personal relationship and so is excluded as a possible form of play. With other individuals these same discernments bear upon the sense of integrity; they feel that there is insincerity when stimulations and satisfactions are sharply separated from the affections. Some, however, are more sensitive to sex stimulation and have greater need for physical contact. To them petting is not insincere, for mutual physical attraction and mutual satisfaction are justifications enough for their activity. With the postponement of marriage there is inevitably an increasing amount of such substitutive behavior.

Chastity

Our boys and girls are quite at sea. They have all the "facts" they need. According to the Kinsey report, many mothers and high school teachers, "including some high school biology teachers, believe that the ninth or tenth grade boy is still too young to receive any sex instruction when, in actuality, he has a higher rate of outlet and has already had a wider variety of sexual experience than most of his female teachers will ever have." They need very much more profound and far-reaching clarification, beyond information or sound doctrine or mere rules. Wise counselors in the past have always seemed to understand the young person's inner difficulties, and to deal with them sympathetically. Today we must offer help in terms of our present conception of the drives and conflicts of youth. Instead of trying to "strengthen the will"

through exhortations or admonishings, we feel that we are getting closer to the individual's needs and long-time purposes, in terms of his regard for himself and for others. While our goals for the individual are in many respects the same as those set in the past, our methods are designed to help each person make his adjustment in terms of his individual needs and capacities.

Ideals

Whatever solution the individual may find for his own strains, we want boys and girls to arrive at this stage with a full sense of responsibility to others, and to themselves. With all the tolerance and liberality we may be able to cultivate, we cannot tolerate irresponsibility, for without responsibility democratic living is impossible. In the absence of clearly defined social sanctions the individual is in need of more personal aid and counsel than ever before.

Teachers, parents, physicians, ministers, psychiatrists can help the individual come to terms with his own nature and find a way of adjusting himself to the best in society. Some individuals have to be urged to let themselves go, or freed from childish fears and inhibitions. Others need, just as much, wise and sympathetic help toward outgrowing "untamed passions" and childish impulses and socially intolerable attitudes toward themselves and others.

A whole generation needs a new clarification as to the meaning of marriage as the normal adult state for men and women. Marriage, we maintain, is more than a legalization of sexual gratification; it is more than a chaining of two persons for the protection of others; it is more than a property arrangement, or an insurance against children becoming public charges. But young people need to learn all that it may be of the things they want for themselves.

Adults, like children, want affection, both to love and

to be loved; they want security, the feeling that in the immediate environment and in the immediate future they are safe, that they can trust those who are with them; they want to feel of worth, to feel that they are wanted and that they are actually serving those for whom they care; they want to feel that they belong, that they not only have the standing and dignity of being part of something greater than themselves, but also the worth and dignity of upholding and enlarging that group; and they want companionship to serve them in intimate and confident exchanges of mutual counsel, stimulation and support.

No one person can adequately supply for a particular individual all of these needs, at any given time. Tragedy for so many young people has resulted from the assumption that they would and could find all this in a happy marriage. Except among those whose religious traditions oppose divorce as an absolute evil, it is generally recognized that the formal sundering of a marriage is a social device that seeks to protect individuals from the destruction of intolerably bad mating. We do not want a decision to be irrevocable. On the other hand, unless young people undertake marriage with the sincere and determined purpose of making it permanent, it has no chance at all. The attitudes toward marriage developed during the period of "new freedom" and trial marriages did not make for higher standards of human happiness but merely for false perspectives. Asking yourself each morning, "Am I happy?" is no way to test long term human relationships. Happiness is not a legitimate goal —it is a by-product of living. There is so much superficial searching for "happiness", so much of self-searching in childish terms suitable for checking the selection of a gown or of a car: Is this just what I want? Was there not something that might have suited me better? Is not

the price too high? The attitudes revealed by such procedures derive from gross ignorance, a confusion of values, completely misguided expectations as to what marriage offers—and what it demands.

We have to help boys and girls find their bearings toward marriage as a hopeful beginning for life on a new level of mutual aid and progressive adjustment. If marriages are indeed made in heaven, they have to be worked out on earth, or they will never get back to their source.

IX

ON CHILDREN AND READING

At no other time and in no other country in the world has there been such an abundance of good books for children as there is now in the United States. Authors, artists, and publishers have given their best. We have beautifully illustrated editions of new and old books, we have inexpensive reprints. The prospect of finding our way among the current outpouring of the press, of choosing from among the vast treasures of books available for children today, appears as a bewildering task. But even here there is help in the form of a thriving book club for children, any number of annotated book lists, books discussing children's reading. The children's rooms in many of our libraries are presided over by people of imagination who have made of their task a fine art and who are also ready to offer excellent advice. No parent need feel at a loss in finding and selecting books for his children. I shall therefore discuss only a few points which seem to trouble parents.

We will not fall into the error of assuming that we can select in advance the "best" books for boys and girls of a given age or the best sequence of books that every child should read, if we recognize that we must know our own children if we are really to serve them. A book that thrills some children will bore others. One nine-year-old wants to roam in fancy to the farthest reaches of imaginary lands; another finds satisfaction in the direct narrative of

children like himself doing the kinds of things he does himself. One is enraptured by the magic of words and rhythm; another is comfortable only with literal prose. If we realize this at the outset, we will refrain from relying too confidently upon the books we ourselves loved in our childhood, attempting to impose upon children our own tastes and standards, not to say our limitations.

When we read stories to the young child, we have an occasion to be with him, to enjoy his company, to get to know him better. If both the child and the parent are to benefit from the experience, we have to guard against taking too seriously our educational mission. Of course we want the child to learn from what we read to him—and from us, too. But most of all it must be a joyous and happy experience for both. We have to respect the child's preferences, and as the child grows older and learns eventually to read to himself, we need still to respect his preferences, and to avoid making him feel that he has to conform, in his reading, to the tastes of others or to current fashions.

It does not follow, however, that in recognizing individual differences we are to leave everything to the child's own choice. In reading, as in other fields of action, the individual will increasingly make his own selections; but for many years the child will need guidance. He should have progressively more freedom to select his reading as he grows older; but with all the freedom we may be disposed to grant, there are constant opportunities for constructive parental help. This help, however, must be in keeping with his interests and his stage of development at a given time.

From the child's own choice of books we may discover the trends of his interests and development. These we may hope to widen into remoter fields, opening up higher levels of understanding and appreciation. It may

be advisable occasionally to arouse curiosity by means of an attractive book that leads in a new direction. But insistence, or a suggestion too pointed, will defeat its purpose, for every child looks with suspicion upon books which adults urge upon him and which are calculated to "do him good".

"Good" and "Bad" Books

The child whose reading has been guided in a subtle manner will continue to look to his elders for further help. Yet we should not wish to deprive him of the thrill of discovering something new and exciting for himself. His first enthusiasms have value; and with doors and shelves open, the young reader can be left to venture for himself. At the same time we will do well to keep available to him other types of reading against the time when he may turn to them.

Timothy put in all his spare time reading the most impossible of all impossible adventure stories. An exceptionally intellectual child was known to read nothing but Mickey-Mouse stories for weeks at a stretch. Such addictions are indicative of changing phases of interest and of changing moods; they need not be taken too seriously. Indeed, our very concern may have the effect of prolonging such spells, for the child naturally resists any attempt to turn him from his own purpose. Like older people, he may take a well meant suggestion for his improvement as a criticism, and resent it accordingly. A girl clung to the stars of a movie magazine much longer than she normally would because it was made into an issue of right and wrong, an issue of her right to choose her own way of enjoying herself; the battle became one of freedom versus control. A more relaxed attitude on the part of the parent would go farther in helping the young explorer move on from one sample to the next.

A common relic of the ancient doctrines regarding reading is found in the demand, which still persists, that children should be permitted to read only such books as carry good "morals". The disposition to make books thoroughly instructive is sometimes carried too far. A book about a little girl and her adventures, published originally as a textbook, was later offered as a general reading book. In one of the stories the little girl was planning to go on a picnic. Her grandmother called her early in the morning. She responded with alacrity; made up her bed hurriedly, and rushed off to the picnic. Here comes a footnote: "Of course she should not have made up her bed before airing it!" Evidently the author feared that the story without comment might mislead the inexperienced reader into the erroneous belief that making up a bed without first airing it is approved practice!

Perhaps the most deep-rooted source of concern about children's reading is the question of the relation between reading and conduct. Parents are constantly afraid that "bad" books will have bad effects, and equally hopeful that "good" books will have good effects. Perhaps both our hopes and our fears are excessive and misplaced. We value reading for its enriching and supplementing of experience; but we have to realize, too, that its effects never operate in a vacuum. There is always the particular child with his particular backgrounds and his particular previous experience.

Limitation of Books

Some time ago rather violent protests were aroused by a book for boys in which the hero spent some time in a lumber camp amid drinking and fighting and other inelegancies. The protestors assumed of course that the evil companions of the hero would affect unfavorably the attitudes of the readers. The book was discussed by an adult

with a number of boys who had read it, and they were asked what they thought of the possible bad effect. One of the boys said, "books don't make you want to do things, like drinking, any more than reading about Sunday school makes you want to go to Sunday school". Of course a child's conduct is not made good or bad by a single impact or a unique experience. Books do not motivate action, though they may suggest patterns and forms. Recently a young man committed suicide; the last book he had read was referred to in his farewell note. Did this book impel him to commit suicide? Why had it not impelled the thousands of others who read it to do so? Neither conduct nor attitudes carry over so simply and directly. We have to be confident that the continuity of favorable influences will provide an armor of defense against evil suggestions. We must recognize that reading about "evil" characters may have special value for the protected child, as perhaps his only means of discovering the obscure and confused motivations of other persons, which he cannot experience. It may help him also to a better understanding of others, and perhaps of himself too, by giving him a chance to work out vicariously the emotions and desires that he has not allowed himself to work out concretely. We cannot expect to isolate our child from all possible "evil", but we may hope to immunize him through this vicarious experiencing, which may serve, in a sense, as a safety valve.

Psychologists and psychiatrists have put into words what poets and dramatists had long recognized, but what in many cases we had not allowed ourselves to see directly. The villain is quite as necessary for the elemental drama as the hero; and the child whose personal contacts and reading have been confined to heroic men and women, whether classic or contemporary, is going to be badly handicapped when he emerges from under his mother's

protecting apron. Moralists and well-intentioned educators in the schools have often destroyed the value in tales of basic conflict by picking them to pieces and squeezing the emotional content out of them. They have intellectualized the stories to bring out correct rules of grammar or of conduct, or to condemn double negatives and wicked desires. It would almost seem that they have worked on the principle that enjoyment is itself an indication of evil, or rather that if you enjoy a book or a play then it cannot be good for you—an analogy to the traditional belief in some mysterious inverse relation between the bitter taste of a medicine and its therapeutic potency.

Reality and Escape

All of us, young and old, need to escape from time to time from the irritations or monotony of daily existence and conflicts. Even young children who derive deep comfort out of stories in which they can find themselves among familiar scenes and processes, need not forever be restricted to the familiar. City children often find stories about animals and birds and tractors interesting after they have outgrown stories about autos and trolleys and fire engines. Country children on the other hand may tire of chickens and cows and silos and want to read about subways and fire engines and big buildings. To be satisfying, the text must apparently offer a secure anchorage in the familiar; but the thrill comes from the excursion into the new.

There has come a severe attack on fairy-tales as possible sources of personality difficulties or mental maladjustments, with the rise of modern psychology and psychiatry, and our greater concern with the meaning of neurotic manifestations. The place of the fairy-tale in the life of the child has accordingly been for many years a subject of controversy. In spite of the age-long persistence

of such tales among all peoples, and the almost universal reappearance of identical stories, educators and psychologists have raised the question whether it would not be better for the modern child to skip altogether these ancient —and childish—inventions.

One source of doubt regarding the desirability of fairy-tales is inherent in the modern emphasis on "science", the preoccupation with the material world and its workings. Many of us are convinced that children need to be acquainted early with man's mastery of materials and forces, which is so distinctive a characteristic of present-day civilizations. We feel that since modern living is so intricate and stimulating, and the mechanics of our daily living are so remote from the child's personal experience, the child's early reading should help him find his way in this complex environment, to insure understanding and to avoid confusion. Hence the recent disparagement of fairy-tales and the emphasis upon factual and "true" stories.

We usually read stories to the child long before he can read for himself. Parents who are usually more familiar with fairy-tales than with other literature of childhood often begin the reading with these. It is well, however, to have the early reading come from stories that are related to the child's actual experience. Up to about four years of age most children have not a sufficient grasp on the concrete realities of their immediate experience to distinguish between the make-believe and the real; and the "enjoying" depends in part upon being able to make such distinction.

The choice is not, however, between the factual and the imaginative. The child needs both. The very fact that fairy-tales the world over and throughout the ages have so much in common suggests that they express something fundamental and universal, something that is significant to all people everywhere. Just because they are primitive and deeply-rooted fairy-tales may represent the mode of

expression that is especially congenial to the child. We expect him to learn how to reason; but we must not expect him to start life as a rationalist. His world has not yet been reduced to the rigid order of a modern scientist. In his world events still happen according to wishes, according to good and evil spirits, according to the need that virtue triumph, rather than in sequence of mechanical cause-and-effect. The individual has to grow into an inner realization of the difference between what we call real and what we think of as make-believe. He cannot sense this difference if he is nourished exclusively on one or the other. And he is obliged at any rate to make his attack upon the world through the only methods that he can manage—those in which waking experience merges into imagination and dreamland.

The Fairy-tale

One criticism of the fairy-tales comes from the fear that the primitive impulses which they express may become fixed or stimulated. Their cruelty and horror in particular expose many of these tales to criticism. The child who is unduly terrified or disturbed by the reading of fairy-tales should, perhaps, be protected from such reading—but he may also need to be helped to meet his own inner difficulties which are the probable cause of such extreme responses. Such reactions of the child are not simple consequences of the imaginative tale: they are symptomatic of an inner state which may need attention. A search for real causes may reveal deep-seated insecurities, fears, needs for reassurance which must be met in other ways than through reading.

The characters and emotions which are so prominent in our traditional folk and fairy-tales are, of course, human and universal. They represent basic drives which are present in every individual: the problem is always of

learning to adjust these to one another and to the need of living with other people. That the fairy-tales are a useful as well as a legitimate part of the child's racial adjustment has been interestingly brought out by their use as vicarious experience and outlets by means of puppets. "Problem children" have been observed as they watched puppet shows of fairy tales. During the performances their feelings were given free expression, and their hates and frustrations, their aggression and fears alike directed at the villain of the piece, as they shouted lustily, "Kill him! Kill him!"

We do not have to wait for the child to present "problems" before we give him opportunities to find socially acceptable outlets for his feelings of resentment or hatred; and the fairy-tales offer an excellent means for such catharsis. If children can act out their tempestuous feelings of rivalry or frustration and let off steam by playing Jack-the-Giant-Killer—and be all the better for the experience—we can be sure that they can get similar values out of reading and enjoying fairy-tales.

Phantasy

Studies and observations on little children can hardly leave a doubt that there is a real need for fantasy and for imaginative experiences and outlets. In all lands we see that children enjoy these tales, and easily understand them no matter what their source. That in our time so simple an invention as Mickey Mouse becomes a universal favorite in all countries, is probably because the animals impersonate sentiments that everybody, including children, can understand.

Where children are deprived of fairy-tales, they make up their own; they personify the wind and the sunshine, and their animistic thinking extends to the chair and the spoon. They dramatize in their make-believe their own

desires and conflicts. A little boy of two, in a rather "realistic" home, had an imaginary visit from an imaginary cow, who came to him from behind the piano at supper time, and demanded to be fed. You could not eliminate that cow without depriving the child of something quite as "real" and as necessary as his own supper.

In many cases fairy stories furnish a welcome compensation for the monotony and drabness of a well-regulated existence; children in comparatively simple surroundings, in direct and dynamic contact with the concrete world, can usually take up the stimulation of the fairy-tales without adverse results. Here again it is a question of measure and grading, of consideration of the child's disposition or temperament.

We need not be concerned about the fantastic unrealities which fairy-tales put into the child's mind. Some at least of these impossibilities were the historical precursors of great inventions. The magic carpet, for example, with some slight and purely technical changes in detail, and rolled into the shape of a "Clipper", can take you across the Atlantic during a single rotation of the earth; and the magic mirror, again with slight technical improvements, and a "silver screen", can bring to every hamlet, for all to see, the living picture of the great and the glamorous; and we have long since improved on Stentor's horn.

The Classics

Until comparatively recent years, most adults had two main tests to fall back upon when selecting books for children. They relied upon the "standard" or "classic" which have received general acceptance as worthy literature; or else they relied upon the books which they had found satisfying during their own early reading. Whatever value such procedures may have had in the past, they do not meet the needs of children today. For an increase

in the number of readers and in the volume of reading available itself brings to the practice of reading a new meaning. We may no longer apply the criteria that a former age had built up for judging a child's reading.

The books of importance, for children as well as for adults, are the books of the living present. These may, indeed, include the "classics", for in addition to the many kinds of "real" information about the world and its inhabitants and its objects, we want from books what various people have thought and felt about the questions that concern us, without regard to the time in which they lived.

The fear is often expressed that the flood of current reading matter will carry children completely out of touch with the classical heritage; and that would be a serious loss. This fear, however, arises largely from a confusion of the classic with the ancient, or from considering the "classic" as confined to complete and isolated creations. The classics are significant to us not because, they are old, but because, and to the extent that, they continue through the ages to be relevant.

It is one of the distinctive characteristics of present-day culture that we are rapidly accumulating new experiences, new insights, new knowledge: there are some questions that the ancients had not even framed, to say nothing of answered. It is to these new understandings and experiences that the growing child must have access, in proportion to his maturity and in terms of his interests. He must keep abreast of what his age is dreaming and doing, he must keep in touch with what his contemporaries are wondering and thinking. Yet, at the same time, in so far as he is able to do so, he must through his reading push his roots into the past experience and thought of the race. This last he may do through the "classics".

No Standard Procedure

There is, however, no standard procedure for insuring all children an introduction to the classics. Moreover, if you do succeed in interesting a child in Shakespeare, or in George Eliot, you need not insist on his reading all of Shakespeare or all of Eliot, nor *only* Shakespeare and Eliot. Nor is it necessary to assume that there is an ideal order in which the great literatures must be brought before children. The characters that have survived from legends and folk tales, from religious lore and classical inventions, as well as from more or less authentic history, have become inseparable from our cultural heritage, so that even current speech and writing are full of allusion to them or to the types they represent—Shylock and Samson, Napoleon and David, Elizabeth and Ruth, Hamlet and Job, Ulysses and Faust—an endless array of personified symbols with which every reader must sooner or later become acquainted. Our enjoyment of contemporary literature and drama is to an important degree influenced by the extent to which the allusions have meaning for us. But it is unnecessary to expect the child to absorb all of his education in a given order, or to complete it at a given date. There is no harm if Sinbad and Alice are acquired after Penrod or Huckleberry Finn.

It is impossible for anybody to live long enough to know "all the classics"; sampling and selecting are constantly needed. Nor can we hope to confine the reading of any child to the relatively few things of "lasting value". It might be well, also, to examine our motives in directing our child toward certain books. We desire to guide him in his own interests, of course, but we are likely at the same time to be anxious to make a good showing in the community. For one of the ways of manifesting our superiority is by having our children appear closely identified

with books, the ancient symbols of culture and social position. We are anxious too, of course, to protect the children from injury—and books are dangerous weapons. And there is the further temptation to have our child make up what we have missed: that list of books which we had at some time hoped to read, but which we never did get around to—it would be nice to have our child complete that schedule!

Adult Fiction for Young Readers

For orientation in human relations and character, fiction is pedagogically much more effective than didactic literature. We parents, however, are apt to deprive our children of the major benefits of fiction, because it concerns itself usually with aspects of life that we seek to keep from the children as long as possible.

The "age of innocence" with its characteristic fear of knowledge is still reflected in the fact that as the libraries grew in number and importance through two generations, the traditional discrimination against fiction persisted. Until very recently some libraries still allowed us to draw out as many as three non-fiction books at a time—since that was for our improvement; but we could have only one book of fiction—to keep us from frittering our time away. This position has been gradually modified and where the policy is continued it is justified on the ground that the greater demand for fiction requires some restrictions. Librarians, along with the rest of us, have been finding out that even fiction which is enjoyable may have significant educational value, for through it one may learn history, or biography, or the customs and manners of other lands.

In judging what adult fiction is suitable for young people, we are likely both to underestimate what they can

appreciate, even without fully understanding, and to overestimate the possible undesirable effects. Most parents would hesitate to select "The Scarlet Letter" or "Richard Feverel" for boys and girls of thirteen; yet many boys and girls of that age have read these and other "serious" novels with positive gain. Often, however, they read through whole passages without getting any clear impression of the author's meaning.

Unwarranted Fears

Many parents fear that their children will be hurt by coming too soon into contact with facts and ideas that are far beyond their experience. Such fears arise mostly from what we ourselves read into the situations depicted, although most of us have, in our own youth, read things that were too advanced for us, without injurious consequences. A girl of thirteen read "The Scarlet Letter" with absorption, and missed entirely the point of the very parts that would make us hesitate to "let" so young a child read this book. She thought that the "A" stood for Arthur—the thing for which it did stand simply did not exist for her. In this same way a great deal will always pass over the heads of young readers, and they will be impressed only by whatever has meaning for them.

We can never estimate what children will get out of a particular book; they often think more deeply than we are likely to suspect from anything they say or do. On the other hand, they also slough off much that may cause us misgivings, and go straight to what they find significant —and what the elders have missed entirely.

Here is part of a composition by a boy of fourteen about books he had been reading the year before—in this case "Les Miserables" and "Giants in the Earth", two books which we would hardly choose for the leisure reading of thirteen-year-old children, books which we would

consider too solemn, too depressing. The composition begins:

> The two characters which I have chosen for this composition are Javert, taken from Hugo's "Les Miserables", and Per Hansa, from O. E. Rolvaag's "Giants in the Earth". They are characters, both of them, which have interested and impressed me, and yet are very different. Their chief likeness is in the fact that either would give all he had for what he thought or believed was right; Javert for his duty, Per Hansa for the sake of another's happiness. . . .
>
> An interesting thing about these two men is the fact that both of them died through what they thought most of. Javert was forced to commit suicide. He suddenly became partially human, and this was his undoing. . . . Javert's duty said "arrest him", his conscience said "No, he is a good man, I have seen it myself". Javert could not neglect his duty; but he had a fair idea of duty. If he obeyed one, he disobeyed the other. He committed suicide.
>
> Per Hansa died in a more dramatic fashion . . . it would be death to any one who went after the minister in that weather. His wife . . . taunted him. This aroused his wrath and he left the house in a fury.

Open Doors

Everything worth reading should be opened up to adolescents. Boys and girls should be encouraged to find out for themselves what is available and what is of greatest worth to them. Above all would I open to them the opportunity to find out what our contemporaries are thinking about the problems that most deeply concern young people. We can safely take it for granted that if their tastes and standards have been cultivated during the earlier years, they will in their youth be able to read extensively, through a range wide in literary merit as well as in subject matter, and to allot their thought and interest with growing discrimination.

It is impossible to maintain a censorship over the read-

ing of young people, and even if it could be made effective it would be highly undesirable. Adolescents read, very much as they eat—more voraciously than discriminatingly. We shall find greater security in exposing boys and girls to all degrees of merit in literature, trusting them to find out for themselves what is of greatest value —to them. We should not in any case gain by placing upon reading an outward restriction that can result only in driving books out of the lives of our charges—for that is what a rigid supervision is most likely to accomplish. Moreover, it is often through complete freedom in their reading that boys and girls discover, or perhaps formulate more clearly, things that have been vaguely troubling them. If, then, they feel free to discuss their reading with their elders, we give them a chance to say what they think and wonder and feel. We may even, perhaps, learn in the process something of our own prejudices, and so be of greatest aid to them as counselors and guides.

Since we assume that it is desirable for people to learn to enjoy reading and to cultivate the companionship of books as a continuing feature of life, we shall find it most effective to put children in the way of discovering, from their own experience, that books have in them something of value, that books do actually yield satisfaction of various kinds. For this reason boys and girls should be free to explore books without too much questioning and checking. They do not care to read much if they must account for what they have read—if they have to pass tests and quizzes or make summaries and outlines. They would rather not read at all! In our eagerness to make sure that our children's reading will be profitable and purposeful, we are tempted to make them do all their reading "with a purpose". The more progressive schools have already discovered that it is possible to get a great deal

of very effective reading of a high grade by simply making the adventure interesting and free. But many parents still need to be assured that the educational value of such free reading may be quite as great as that of reading which is prescribed and therefore distasteful, and that it does eventually lead to "reading with a purpose".

The Current Scene

With all their affectation of flippancy and irreverence, modern youth are eager to know the realities, especially with respect to love and marriage. They cannot be put off either with fairy tales or with those domestic scenes of the past that no longer represent the living environment. The frantic efforts of many people to fit themselves, with their various traditions and various standards, into a new age, necessarily result in confusion and uncertainty; and this is reflected in current fiction. But this confusion and uncertainty are neither resolved nor concealed by withholding the modern fiction from our young people. It is true that a great deal is extreme—but one need not recommend Cabell or Joyce for steady diet.

It is difficult for young people to get any clear conception of modern marriage from observation alone. What is going on in the way of constructive adjustment does not find its way into fiction, or even into essays, as do the more dramatic flounderings and tragedies. The latter, moreover, are not going to be altogether overlooked, even by those who do not read at all. We may therefore consider it not only "safe" but desirable for our boys and girls to make the acquaintance of such realism as Dreiser's *An American Tragedy,* Gunther's *Inside U. S. A.,* Lillian Smith's compelling story of the South, *Strange Fruit,* Charles Jackson's disturbing *Lost Weekend,* or Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath.*

These are not stories with "happy endings" of the

traditional type. But after all, is it quite certain that the happy-ending stories are of lasting importance to maturing personalities? A little girl of ten years overheard the reading of a newspaper account of the marriage of a man and woman who had worked side by side in a motion-picture production. The reporter said, "This couple, who had written happy endings for the silver screen were writing a happy ending for themselves." But listening to the reading, the little girl broke in, "A happy beginning, I should say!" A child of ten can understand that marriage means a beginning, not an ending. This modern child can be served four or five years later only by literature which sincerely attempts to deal with modern life in realistic terms.

It is, of course, impossible to generalize from the reactions of a few children what a given book will do to other children in the same age group; the range of reactions is great—and we come back to dealing with the individual child. A teacher reported that one little girl burst into tears when she read to the class, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin". Should all children of this age be deprived of this classic because one child reacted in this way? Should even this child be deprived of this emotional outlet? We adults read books that stir us, even make us weep. At the theater or movies we may have a good cry and say we "enjoyed" the play. Why may not children "enjoy" in similar ways?

Ephemeral Reading

Since the beginning of the century, and especially since the world war, there has been a remarkable growth in the quantity of magazine fiction, and of magazine reading. This reflects to a degree the expansion of reading in the population: a larger portion of the entire population reads, and it is chiefly the older adolescents and the

younger adults who do most of this reading. That magazine reading exceeds book reading is in part due to the fact that the interests of the younger readers have to do with subjects and treatment that have not yet found their way into books. In part it is due, also, to the need of short-cuts in their reading—the hurry of modern life puts a premium on things quickly read.

Many of us still retain vestiges of reverence for the printed page, and consequently attach too much importance to the possible effects of books. We have learned, pretty generally, to dismiss newspapers and magazines as of transient or ephemeral importance. We are taking it more and more for granted that children will read newspapers, but we are not greatly concerned that this reading will be either a waste of time or of great value. Abut "books", however, most parents feel differently.

We need to realize, and help children to recognize, not only that there is a legitimate place for books of merely transient interest, but that we have at present a vast amount of "journalism" in the guise of books. We have to learn to discard things that look outwardly like the objects on library shelves for which we had acquired a certain awe, but which are in reality trivial or momentary information or entertainment, to be scanned, read quickly or in part, and dismissed. Books, in short, need not all be treated alike; and discriminations will grow only with experience, guided perhaps, but essentially free to experiment, to take or to leave.

We may think of books as instruments for many other laudable purposes besides those of traditions. Books can inform; but they can also be excellent without any informative value. Books can amuse; and if they accomplish that, though they accomplish no more, they have served a purpose. Books can stimulate; but not every book need be stimulating. Books open up to the child the

world of human nature, of human conduct and relationships, as does no other resource. They extend his vision and understanding immeasurably beyond anything possible through direct experience and observation. The books a child reads, along with his other early experiences, go toward building up his opinions and prejudices. But it is also through further reading that these bigotries and provincialisms are likely to be overcome.

Book Sets

Children must be expected to outgrow books as they outgrow games; but it is impossible to schedule all available books for an ideal sequence of reading. The time to read a particular book is when it is interesting to the reader. At the same time an abundance of good books increases the likelihood that there will always be at hand one that fits both the interest of the moment and the need for further growth.

This brings us to the question of book sets of which there are two major types available—the set which is a collection of literature for reading, and the set which is for encyclopedic use. Parents are easily enthused to buying the first type of set, but are often deceived by the specious argument that these supply a vast amount of reading matter at a comparatively low unit cost. The ratio of page-per-penny is generally low enough; but it is a mistake to accept the number of pages as a measure of the amount of reading. No child will want to read all of a set, unless, perhaps, he is confined by forty days of rain or sickness. But the important consideration, so far as cost is concerned, is whether we can afford such a "set" in addition to currently interesting or important books. For having a set is no substitute for buying or borrowing new books that are significant for the child from time to time.

The encyclopedic type of set, of course, answers quite a different need, and is invaluable to the child bent on securing information for whatever purpose.

The Non-Reader

In recent years we have discovered that more and more boys and girls come to high school, and even to college, with a very poor mastery of reading technique. We turn of course at once to the techniques used by the schools in teaching children reading; and in many cases these are found to be defective. We have, however, made great progress toward remedying this condition. Schools are increasingly availing themselves of the facilities and techniques which have been worked out in remedial reading, and it is to be hoped that these efforts will greatly reduce the number of actual reading disabilities found in our schools.

There is, however, another class of non-reader whose resistence to reading does not derive from any actual disability, but rather from a disinclination. The causes for this kind of non-reading may be traced to various sources. The child may be simply among those people who prefer to be "doing" most of the time, and for whom the very inactivity of sitting and reading is irksome. Or he may be resisting a type of pressure, particularly in a family where the others have set up a standard of "good reading" to which he does not feel quite equal. Rather than expose himself and his reading tastes to ridicule or contempt, he simply refuses to read at all. In the latter case the remedy would seem to lie in giving the child real freedom of choice together with some assurance that his reading is his own affair, and that no one is going to "check up" on him. As for the child who simply prefers other things to reading we will serve him best if we try to introduce him to books in connection with his activities

and interests—and accept without stigma the fact that he will never, perhaps, be a "great reader".

A boy of rather intellectual parents was doing only fair work in school, and never read a book that was not "required". His free time he spent on mechanical devices and radios, although he did read some of the popular magazines on mechanics and inventions. His indifference to books was a source of real concern to his parents. At fifteen years, however, he suddenly discovered a use for books. These were not, to be sure, "literature"; they were technical books and manuals and reference books. While away at boarding school he noted some curious phenomena in the vacuum tubes of his radio set and scoured the school library and the local library for all the information he could find. Sometimes, as in this case, reading may result from some special interest—and this is just as valid as that a special interest should result from reading.

Occasionally a parent indicates disappointment that after all the effort made to place before our children all the wealth of the world's literature, we see none of the eagerness to take advantage of the "opportunity" that young people of an earlier generation manifested through voracious and omnivorous reading. Many young people today are voracious and omnivorous; but it is by no means certain that these characteristics are in themselves of the great value we sometimes assume. Dramatic eagerness is to be expected only where the getting of enough suitable reading is difficult. We do not eat regular meals with the same enthusiasm for food that we show when meals are occasional. Children today have access to practically all there is to read. They take reading as a matter of course, and there is no point, in most cases, in walking miles to borrow a book. Let us remember, too, that the imaginative boy or girl of ability has today other oppor-

tunities to become acquainted with the world and that his reading will be influenced by all he sees and hears. In fact, these modern media of vicarious experience—the great competitors of reading, the movies and the radio—may lead the present generation back to the classics and introduce them to the best in modern fiction.

X

SCHOOL, HOME, AND COMMUNITY

For many years, now, going to school has been an accepted part of the child's life. Parents know that at five or six or seven (depending upon the state in which they happen to live) the child will go out from the sheltering parental wings to take his place at school along with his fellows. Many parents look forward eagerly toward his being "grown up". Others, on the contrary, dread this going forth which represents to them a breaking of the close ties of babyhood. There are still others who harbor a resentment against the school as a usurper of their own prerogative to educate or discipline their children as they see fit.

Whichever of these attitudes a parent takes toward his child's school-going, that attitude goes with the child to school, and plays an important part in his adjustment there. It affects his learning, his behavior and his relationships with his classmates and with his teachers. How the parents feel about school is, therefore, a matter of considerable importance.

Parents' Attitudes

A generation ago most parents regarded school as a thing apart—a section of their child's experience over which they had no jurisdiction or control. This attitude has been changing rapidly, however. The change has been

due partly to the stimulus given to parents by such groups as the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the Child Study Association of America, and partly, too, to the fact that the parents of today's school children have themselves had enough schooling to be familiar with the problems and the subject matter being taught to their children in the schools. We see today more and more parents determined to share with the school responsibility for their children's education. More and more, too, schools are recognizing the importance of the parents' cooperation for unifying the child's experience in and out of school.

The nature and extent of this cooperation and the ways for achieving it are, however, still somewhat uncertain. In our efforts to "cooperate" and to "unify", many of us have assumed that since parents and teachers are exerting themselves for the benefit of the same children their interests and concerns and objectives are necessarily identical. This tradition has obscured the fact that the home and the school play two distinct roles in the education and training of the child. Home and school have not only distinct objectives; they approach their tasks in different ways and employ different techniques. And the more fully each recognizes its own special function in relation to the child, the more consciously each bases its approach upon the unique values that it alone can contribute, the more will the child profit from the combined efforts of these two institutions operating in his behalf.

This is not at all to say that home and school are to work along independently, ignoring one another. It is rather to emphasize the need for a more effective cooperation. To further this, parents and teachers must be clear as to just why and where their demands upon the child and their expectations for him are different. They

have to understand at which points they must maintain distinct attitudes, as well as those points at which school and home must plan together.

Teachers and Parents Have Different Viewpoints

Most teachers have long known that in the schoolroom they have to address themselves not to "average children" but to particular boys and girls. At the same time most parents have still to learn that the schoolroom deals with children in a group, of which their particular child is only a part. Thus the first education of parents on the subject of schooling must be to get them to see their child in relation to other children, as one of many. As a matter of fact, one of the prime values of the school lies in this very merging process, wherein the child learns to think of himself as part of a group of his peers. For some children this process is easier than for others. For some parents, too, it comes hard, and then only as a conscious, stoic acceptance.

It will help if we see in the child's early school experiences a substitute and perhaps also a compensation for the benefits of the larger families of an earlier day. Today, with our spaced families, every child is, in a sense, an only child, working and playing in a world of his own. If he has a brother or sister, it is usually one enough older or younger to have a different routine and time-schedule, different play needs and interests. There are usually not even cousins of the same age who live within playing distance; and in the city apartment there are often not even neighbors accessible for playing.

We see, for example, a four-year-old whose older sister is already off to school. He plays alone. He eats alone, in state, completely surrounded by a mother or relative. He knows that if he fusses about his food, or if he bumps himself while playing, he can stir up the anxiety of all

the adults in the household and focus their concern upon himself. He holds the center of the stage.

At school the child finds a different type of situation. There is a teacher who is concerned about him, yes—but who is concerned also about a great many other children with equal claims upon her attention. Illustrative of the difference is the instance of a mother who, learning that her seven-year-old's class were to go on their first "trip" from school, came to the teacher that morning with the urgent plea that she "promise to hold Johnny's hand all the way—he's so likely to be wild". This mother had no worry about what might become of the other thirty-four children, some of whom might also have been "wild", while the teacher devoted herself wholly to her one darling! In somewhat lesser degree, but just as emotionally, parents often expect their children's teachers to "hold them by the hand", not only fearing, but even resenting, the dilution of interest and attention that must take place in the classroom.

The Child in the Group

School offers the child a situation in which the companionship of other children of his own age is implicit—they are not visitors or guests, but children on his own level of importance, with whom he learns to share the attention of the adult, to share the work and play equipment that is available, and to acquire the rudimentary give and take of social relationships with his peers.

School provides also the opportunity for the child to take his place as one of a group, to share its undertakings as well as its privileges. Here the young child can learn to take responsibilities according to his age and abilities. As the modern home is organized it offers little opportunity to the young child to share in any of the real responsibilities of living. In an earlier generation when the

home was a fairly compact unit, old and young worked side by side. This meant that children, by taking part in the life of the home and the community as a matter of routine, were getting their education day by day. There was no sharp separation between the living of the community as carried on by men and women, and the preparation for living, as carried on by children, except as the daily living naturally divides itself into those portions that are carried by adults, and those enjoyed and handled by children. These functions of the group are no longer to be found in home and family life. Today it is the school which must provide the group learning, group pressures, group examples and group experiences from which the child will derive the techniques of living in the larger community.

The fact that school and home perform different educational tasks for the same children sometimes causes some confusion and some mistrust, or at least misgivings. We feel called upon to decide which is more important, which should have the final word. But that is not necessary. Both are today essential for the welfare of the child; each has a distinct function. It is necessary that we recognize and harmonize their distinctive contributions.

The school has been increasingly transmitting to our children not only the old culture but also the current gains in science and exploration, and in social and political changes. It is thus taking on a new authority, which raises some misgivings, for there is danger that the school will subtly undermine the prestige of the home and of the parents—something we should naturally wish to avoid. Here, too, it is necessary to recognize clearly the distinctive roles of these two agencies.

The Child as an Individual

When we distinguish between the educational functions of the school and those of the home, we must consider

what the school has to do in relation to the home, and vice versa. The teacher's business is now, as always, to teach. But there is a special point in saying today that the teacher must teach not merely *subjects,* but *children.* That means that the teacher must be aware of the child as a whole, as a person; she must know something of what he brings with him into the schoolroom besides his five senses.

As the school is conducted today, the teacher is in need of a certain insight with which to sense undercurrents, to project herself beyond the superficial appearances and actions of children. This quality has always been felt to be of value in teachers but it has not yet come to be considered standard equipment. We recognize that it would be desirable, for example, for the first grade teacher to know that Joan is an only child who for the first six years of her life has been almost smothered by attentions from adults, and has little or no contacts with other children. Or for her to know what was needed in the case of Morton, who has been steadily discouraged by the easy successes of his very brilliant brother. We know, too, that instead of reprimanding the mother for spoiling her only one—the teacher might be more useful to the mother and to all the children if she could more directly help each one make an adjustment to his new world.

The parent is of necessity more subjective and personal in relation to the child; it is after all *his* or *her* child that is in question. The educator has no right to reproach the parent with being sentimental or emotional or "narrow"—these limitations in the parent are part and parcel of the virtue of being a parent who cares. On the other hand, the teacher must represent the group—the community and its interests as well as the particular group of children before her. The school has to help individuals to work together, consider one another, subordinate the

irrelevant personal to the essential common. But it must not in the process crush the essentially personal and individual that each child brings with his unique background and constitution.

Each and All

The teacher cannot take each child's problems too deeply to heart; the parent cannot do otherwise. After all, the parent really has more at stake than has the teacher—a fact that the teacher must eventually recognize and accept. Parents have to live with their children year in and year out, in health and in sickness, in school time, vacations, and holidays, in good times and in bad. The continuity of relationships gives the parents the strategic advantage of continuity of influence. The teacher can afford to be more or less detached, to concentrate on specific educational tasks, to disregard the emotional consequences of certain strains. The parent is obliged to consider the child in a long-range perspective with regard to their mutual relationships.

A history teacher complains that Betty is not working as well as she might and appeals to the mother to exert some pressure upon her daughter. But the mother decides that her adolescent daughter needs her pressure or influence more at other points, other concerns that the mother alone can meet. While being cooperative, of course, she saves her heavy ammunition, and leaves it to the teacher to exert the rigid discipline in regard to history. For the teacher can do with impunity what the mother can do only at some risk to the subtler values in her relationship with the growing child. The teacher will live with that child to the end of the term at most. The mother, however, has constantly to ask herself "will the things I do and say to Betty today affect our relationships tomorrow, or next month, or in years to come?"

The parent, on the other hand, while interested intensely—and legitimately—in his own child, can profit most from the school only by recognizing that that institution has a different work to perform. He must make no demands upon the school that are not in harmony with the needs of the entire group for which the teacher is responsible. There may be difference of opinion between parents and teachers as to discipline, or as to methods, or as to choice of subject matter. Sometimes parents, like teachers, have strong convictions. Must they then insist on having their ideas accepted by the school? It is a part of the child's education to learn how to adapt himself to different kinds of situations, different kinds of people, different kinds of notions. It is the parent's business to interpret to the child the sources and the reasons for whatever differences seem to divide him from the teacher. Increasingly, however, the teacher must interpret sympathetically the divergent viewpoints of the home, whether it be about matters of health or social philosophy. Weakening the authority of the home is not strengthening the school's stand; it only confuses the child and is a strain on his essential loyalties.

Interpretation for Adjustment

It should be possible for the parent to appreciate the teacher's task in terms of twenty or thirty darlings like her own making their several demands at the same time. An affectionate teacher is often more effective than a cold one; but it is futile to ask of teachers that they love their pupils as do their respective parents and it would be undesirable for them to do so if they could. It is equally futile and equally undesirable to demand that parents be as objective in their educational efforts as are good teachers. It is in the nature of parents to be emotionally involved where their children are concerned; and it is in

the nature of the good teacher to bring to her task a degree of objectivity that makes for balance and perspective. The teacher, as an expert, may be ever so competent or ever so well equipped, ever so interested in her class or in the particular children before her; yet parents must realize that her concerns must be of necessity restricted. The teacher, on the other hand, must accept the fact that a particular child *is* the center of the mother's concern, without resenting her excessive eagerness, or her disregard of the interests of all the other children. Precisely because the two are so different, parents and teachers can make their educational contributions in distinct yet complementary ways; and it is for this reason necessary that each be aware of the problems and functions of the other.

Emotional Drives of Teacher and Parent

An entente between teacher and parent demands of both not only an understanding of the child but also some insight into their own drives. The teacher's patience may be tried by what she considers the inexpert criticism of the mother. She feels that the mother appreciates neither the magnitude of her job nor the breadth of her experience. She knows the school system and she has taught hundreds of children. But this unspoken emphasis on her own professional status may be only a cloak for deeper and more fundamental feelings—perhaps, if she is unmarried, an unconscious jealousy of the woman who has a home and children of her own. The mother, on her part, may resent with all her maternal fervor the presumption that anyone can know more about her child than she does. It may even be evident that she feels a certain contempt for the spinster who knows children only in rows and acting under rules.

The fact that we have today so many mother-teachers

should modify these attitudes, and should help not only to solidify the common purposes but also to point up the essential differences between the tasks of mother and teacher. Nor need the mother-teacher resist these differences when she sits on the other side of the teacher's desk. On the contrary, her dual role makes her especially equipped to help other mothers to see and understand these differences.

The Teacher's Awareness

If we are to get optimum results, the teacher must be aware of the child as an individual; and not merely as an isolated individual but as a member of a particular family group. Each child brings with him to school all sorts of attitudes, biases and drives that have their sources in his family situation. Every good teacher knows that the individual child's classroom adjustments are often influenced by factors that never appear in conversation or in lessons. It is not only that children vary as to their intelligence, their special interests, capacities, and temperaments. They vary also as to their age-place in the respective families, as to the encouragements or repressions they experience in their homes, and as to the degree to which they are involved in the struggles of their parents to maintain their homes and their mutual relations—or to escape from intolerable situations.

It thus becomes increasingly imperative that the teacher have some insight into what is happening in various homes, and what effects these happenings may have upon the individual children who come to her from those homes. Such happenings, large and small, together with the manner in which they are affecting the parental attitudes and behavior, often provide the background for school difficulties seemingly unrelated. Obviously the teacher cannot visit the home of each of her pupils, even

if she had the desire to devote all her "free" time to so worthy an undertaking. She must, therefore, count upon the parents to supply much of the background from which she may derive a helpful picture of the children who come daily before her. What are the parents' outlooks upon life, their difficulties, and their aspirations for themselves and their children? What other children are there in the family? What is the relation of this child to his brothers and sisters? What are the effects upon this child's attitudes of the father's aspirations or the mother's solicitude? Is the rebellious spirit a reaction against the school or against a dominating parent, or against an older brother or sister?

Very often the parent can interpret difficulties, or help the teacher to see danger signals; for overt misbehavior is not the only means by which children may react to their difficulties. Even those things in the child's conduct that seem to merit classroom approval may sometimes point to conditions that call for further exploration. The "good child" is not always the emotionally well-adjusted child. A young boy's devotion to the study of steam engines and fire turned out to be the expression not of a scientific urge, but of a powerful rivalry with an older brother who was getting all the attention, and who had to be shown that Edgar was not a dumbbell. The fine poster a girl made for a school exhibit and contest was completed at the expense of work from which her mother needed to be relieved, but which, because of certain home tensions, the girl was unwilling to do. In such cases the teacher may approve the results of the child's activities, but it is important, too, that she understand the drive that makes him persist in carrying out his purpose, and that she recognize his activities as symptomatic of motivations that may easily manifest themselves in destructive ways.

The Child Who Is "Different"

But in the last analysis it is the particular responsibility of the home to assume the continuous guidance and adjustment of its children, however much the school may be counted on to contribute. Especially is this so with respect to the child who is "different"—the child who, in one way or another, runs into more than average difficulty in adjusting to the group, whether through shyness or aggression, or through some discrepancy in skills which makes him either more or less able than his peers in some special direction. Parents who realize that this adjustment is a *process,* not to be automatically achieved by the mere act of "going to school", will greatly help their children to feel less "odd". Furthermore, if parents appreciated that the particular difficulties which such a child presents demand a little *more* of the teacher's time, patience and skill than the individual has normally a right to expect, they would find the teacher all the more ready to make that greater effort.

One mother of such a child made a practice of dropping in informally at intervals, when she came to call for her child, to ask the teacher whether in the interim there had been any special occurrences about which she should know. Such casual but unmistakable manifestations of interest served to make the task pleasanter and more effective for the teacher. For not only is the parent thus kept in touch with happenings and relationships at school which may throw light on home situations, but, conversely, the teacher is kept informed as to "how the wind blows" at home. And both may thus be helped toward an acceptance of the child for what he is, without resentments and fears and defenses on the one side, and without condescensions or reproaches on the other.

if she had the desire to devote all her "free" time to so worthy an undertaking. She must, therefore, count upon the parents to supply much of the background from which she may derive a helpful picture of the children who come daily before her. What are the parents' outlooks upon life, their difficulties, and their aspirations for themselves and their children? What other children are there in the family? What is the relation of this child to his brothers and sisters? What are the effects upon this child's attitudes of the father's aspirations or the mother's solicitude? Is the rebellious spirit a reaction against the school or against a dominating parent, or against an older brother or sister?

Very often the parent can interpret difficulties, or help the teacher to see danger signals; for overt misbehavior is not the only means by which children may react to their difficulties. Even those things in the child's conduct that seem to merit classroom approval may sometimes point to conditions that call for further exploration. The "good child" is not always the emotionally well-adjusted child. A young boy's devotion to the study of steam engines and fire turned out to be the expression not of a scientific urge, but of a powerful rivalry with an older brother who was getting all the attention, and who had to be shown that Edgar was not a dumbbell. The fine poster a girl made for a school exhibit and contest was completed at the expense of work from which her mother needed to be relieved, but which, because of certain home tensions, the girl was unwilling to do. In such cases the teacher may approve the results of the child's activities, but it is important, too, that she understand the drive that makes him persist in carrying out his purpose, and that she recognize his activities as symptomatic of motivations that may easily manifest themselves in destructive ways.

The Child Who Is "Different"

But in the last analysis it is the particular responsibility of the home to assume the continuous guidance and adjustment of its children, however much the school may be counted on to contribute. Especially is this so with respect to the child who is "different"—the child who, in one way or another, runs into more than average difficulty in adjusting to the group, whether through shyness or aggression, or through some discrepancy in skills which makes him either more or less able than his peers in some special direction. Parents who realize that this adjustment is a *process,* not to be automatically achieved by the mere act of "going to school", will greatly help their children to feel less "odd". Furthermore, if parents appreciated that the particular difficulties which such a child presents demand a little *more* of the teacher's time, patience and skill than the individual has normally a right to expect, they would find the teacher all the more ready to make that greater effort.

One mother of such a child made a practice of dropping in informally at intervals, when she came to call for her child, to ask the teacher whether in the interim there had been any special occurrences about which she should know. Such casual but unmistakable manifestations of interest served to make the task pleasanter and more effective for the teacher. For not only is the parent thus kept in touch with happenings and relationships at school which may throw light on home situations, but, conversely, the teacher is kept informed as to "how the wind blows" at home. And both may thus be helped toward an acceptance of the child for what he is, without resentments and fears and defenses on the one side, and without condescensions or reproaches on the other.

Cultural Contrasts

There is another source of difference between school and home that calls for special understanding. For historical reasons that can be blamed on no individuals or groups, our schools for a century have represented a cultural tradition that contrasted at many points with the home backgrounds and outlooks. The teacher's understanding and sympathy for children from the various types of home came with difficulty, and often, unfortunately, not at all. How could teachers earnestly bent upon making these strange children more like themselves avoid altogether the invidious hint? The greater the breach between home and school, the more the child is compelled to choose between them. This is a choice that no child should be forced to make; he needs both home and school to round out his experience of living. If the home's opposition is so effective that it outweighs the school, the child is cut off from many of the expansions of experience which the school should offer him. If—as more often happens—the child rejects the home and throws the weight of his allegiance to the school and its society of other children, the deeper loyalties of the home will be seriously threatened. In any case, such mutual suspicions or jealousies almost invariably find their victims in the child whom parent and teacher are both trying to help.

As our culture becomes more unified, we may expect parents and teachers to have increasingly similar backgrounds of education and values—they will presumably come to speak the same language. And we may expect that parents will share in the consideration of changes in the outlooks and methods of the schools.

What Is Progressive Education?

Parents in considerable numbers are already beginning to ask questions, spurred by the so-called experi-

mental schools. They have been hearing about "progressive education" and they are eager to know what its values are for their children.

There is, for example, the changed approach to discipline—the emphasis upon a self-discipline that grows from interest and responsibility rather than from restraints and regimentation. Despite the earlier rumors of wild disorder rampant in the classrooms, parents are beginning to recognize that in these schools "freedom" does not mean lawlessness or license, but rather a democratic way of living based on respect for one another's work and the opportunities of each individual to contribute what he can to the undertakings of the group.

There is, too, the difference in emphasis upon academic teaching. The so-called tool subjects—the three R's—are often deferred in the experimental school in favor of more creative activities. Parents who have watched with misgivings have found that the children did eventually acquire the three R's, and a great deal besides.

Those who have followed this development over a long period are realizing now that progressive education has come of age. It has passed the "revolt" period, the negative attack upon obvious restrictions such as immovable desks and immobile children, and is developing a more positive, if less dramatic, program which includes the needed disciplines and the needed skills.

It is true that for the majority of parents such schools are unavailable, and there is as a rule no question of *choosing* a school. The number of progressive schools is still small, and the cost of tuition in those few is beyond the means of most families. Yet the philosophies and ideology of progressive schools are within the reach of all who care to espouse them. Public school systems in increasing numbers are becoming "progressive". Parents who are convinced that this new approach to education

would benefit their children and their neighbors' children can work together to overcome some of the more regimented methods in their own school system and infuse into it some of the new spirit. The few progressive schools, working with a few children, must be viewed as the outposts of progress, where experiments in education may be tried freely with the cooperation of willing parents. What comes out of these experiments that is worth while and of lasting value will be assimilated gradually into our public school system, to benefit larger numbers. It is not a question of education for the privileged few, but rather a means of benefiting many. It is the democratic way of effecting change.

Whether or not we shall send our child to a progressive school, if one is available, must depend partly upon circumstances, and even more upon the particular child and his particular needs. For example, the fatigue of having to travel long distances to a chosen school may sometimes outweigh the advantages of education to be found there. Sometimes the tuition of such a school means that the family sacrifices along other lines—and the sacrifice may be too great. And again the child may be one to whom a more formal or more academic schooling would be more beneficial. There is no rule of thumb which says that any one approach to education is best for all children everywhere. And it is precisely this doubt that is beginning to penetrate into our larger school systems. It represents a drastic change from our regimented pattern of education "for all alike"—and this change we owe to the philosophies and experiments of progressive education.

School and Home Supplement Each Other

But whatever the type of school to which we send our child, it will still remain necessary for the home to sup-

plement the child's education at points where the school is lacking. If the school is one which insists on the three R's to the exclusion of freer activities, then the home will have to offer those activities in the after-school hours. If, on the other hand, the school offers much freedom and little pressure, we can afford to insist upon a more definite routine and some "toeing-of-the-mark" at home.

We have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that no school is perfect—no school will do for our children all that we hope. Nor can we even by the most careful choosing insure ourselves against regrets or even against our children's reproaches. "If only you had not sent me to a progressive school" they may say—or perhaps "If only you *had*." We cannot know in advance—or even in retrospect.

A mother came to discuss a school problem concerning a very intelligent boy of eleven. He was already two years ahead of his age-grade, and the school was suggesting another jump. Certainly with his unusually high I.Q. he could "take it". But there were other important considerations: emotionally and physically he remained just eleven, and his social adjustment to boys already well on into adolescence would be difficult. The mother was advised not to push him ahead. But she had misgivings: "Perhaps he will reproach me in later years for holding him back. Don't you think I'd better let him decide this for himself?" To which the adviser replied: "I believe in allowing children great scope in making decisions for themselves. But on such a question, on which we have given our best thinking and still find it puzzling, how can you expect him to make a wise choice? As to his reproaches, I can only say that I make few predictions, but I am willing to make this one: he *will* reproach you—either way!" For it is in the nature of the parent-child relationships that there must be doubts—and therefore

reproaches. If he skips and at fourteen finds himself excluded socially, he will be unhappy. If he does not skip, he may be bored and wonder why he was not allowed to go ahead. On the basis of experience, we choose for him what we consider the lesser evil. We can choose only one of several roads to education, and this choice must be guided by our own best wisdom.

Education More Than Learning

There is a growing awareness, among parents as well as among teachers, that the child's school experience includes more than his intellectual development. Particularly today, with other opportunities for social contacts decreasing, the child's ability to get along with his peers, as well as with adults, must develop from his school experiences. The good school, therefore, does not consider that its whole job is done when it reports the child's satisfactory progress in arithmetic or grammar. Many schools include in their reports a complete picture of the child as they see him operating in the group. Such a report is helpful to the parent only if it is properly interpreted. For somehow it seems to "mark" the parent too. An unsatisfactory mark in geography the parent accepts as merely a disability in the child; but to say that he has "unsatisfactory social contacts" or "lack of initiative or leadership" seems, somehow, an indictment of the parents. We must learn to accept with less emotion, without a sense of guilt, the differences among children in these respects. We can interpret the school's report in the light of our own knowledge about our child; but we can also value the school's help in building him up at his weak points.

The lengthening of the school day and the extension of school activities mean that the school is absorbing more and more of the child's time and energy and interest.

Nevertheless, paradoxical as it may seem, the longer the school day the more important becomes the parent's part in the child's education.

Cooperation Works Both Ways

Somehow both the school and home must find a solution to their mutual problem of educating "the whole child". Somehow they must both agree upon certain things that are essential to be learned, that will not have to be soon unlearned. They must agree upon developing attitudes which will grow as the child grows and they must help the child to make adjustments to the changes that inevitably come in a swiftly changing world. Together they must build up in the child certain securities which will not fail him in his moments of greatest need.

There are many practical and immediate questions which can be faced most constructively only on this basis of cooperation. There is, for instance, the question of homework. Many schools still feel this is a necessary evil, but have little conception of the difficulties it has always presented to the home with its smaller quarters and manifold distractions. It should be possible for the school to assume certain phases of "homework," leaving to the home the things which will not only bring closer cooperation but contribute enrichment to the school subjects. Homes very often are capable of enriching school work in a way and to a degree which is frequently unrecognized.

Many misunderstandings in regard to the health of the school child—emotional as well as physical health—can be met by home and school together. It is altogether possible to take away much of the fear of physical examinations, and to bring better cooperation as regards prevention and precaution against infections. Some of the other "school problems" in the solution of which home co-

operation is essential include the school lunch and the lunch period; the elimination of some of those more difficult and subtle problems of likes and dislikes and fears; the development of a philosophy of education which maintains that every day should represent a normally happy progress in growth.

School an Adjunct to the Home

To a greater extent than ever before this is a parents' era in education. Parents in increasing numbers will be more and more dissatisfied with the narrow, formalized, routine type of school-keeping that is still the dominant form, especially in our largest cities. Parents, in ever widening circles, in public schools quite as much as in the little advance guard of private progressive schools, will lead in making the changes; will insist upon wholesome behavior attitudes in the school environment; will demand more richly prepared, more understanding teachers, able to meet the emotional, intellectual and esthetic needs of individual children.

As the hours that children spend in school increase in number and as more and more of their years are spent in some educational institution, these institutions will of necessity become stronger in their influence. They will not, however, serve the best interests of the children and young people unless they use that very strength and power to strengthen home and family life. No matter how well organized and effective they are, they must not consider the homes mere adjuncts to themselves, but rather must they consider themselves adjuncts to the home, as, indeed, they were supposed to be in the first place.

XI

RADIO, MOVIES, AND THE COMICS

A carefully brought up twelve-year-old girl was invited to an afternoon party which was to include a visit to a musical show. As the hostess was presumably a woman of taste and discretion, the invitation was accepted. The girl liked the show. When her mother asked for further particulars she explained, "It was about the private life of chorus girls. And it *was* a little vulgar."

The mother caught her breath, but managed to say, as casually as she could, "I am glad you know the difference."

A few hours later the girl came back with a perplexity, which she expressed in this broad statement: "If one knows the difference, then it doesn't matter what one hears or sees." The mother had to admit the general principle, but was put to it to explain a very important qualification—with too frequent exposure to exhibitions of vulgarity or poor taste one's sensibilities may become blunted; one's discernments may become less discriminating; and then one no longer "knows the difference."

This is as true of adults as it is of children. And parents accept it as part of their responsibility, in exercising—as they still do—some discretion or choice as to taking young children to various performances, or as to "letting" them go places and see sights. Increasingly, however, the changing forces in modern life have broken through the

castle walls of the private home. They are invaded by uninvited voices in ways and in forms that are often very disconcerting. Children are exposed to displays and discoveries among which parents sometimes feel they can make no selection. These bewildering situations call for new examination and testing of old values and rules; they call for new modes of discipline, new controls, new forms of guidance.

Modern Intrusions

Not so long ago it was possible for parents to feel secure when they once got the child inside the house—he could do his "home work", as school work is so often called; he could be shielded from distracting interruptions. Today the 'phone call from a distant friend is more penetrating and more compelling than was shouting over the back fence. The comics insinuate themselves along with the indispensable "news". Everybody goes to whatever movies chance may bring; and our child, if only to keep in touch with everybody, goes too. And now the radio has become a universal means of communication from a thousand sources, all focusing on one central point of discharge, the ear of the alert but undiscriminating young listener.

We may formerly have succeeded fairly well in shutting the world out or shutting ourselves in. But today's new devices repeatedly penetrate our very walls. When the telephone bell rings, it cannot be ignored. The daily newspaper insists upon being read. The knobs on the radio control only partially the amount and the character of the noises coming through.

These invaders are distracting because they interrupt the normal course of events and interfere with our plans. But we seem most of all to fear these half artificial and mechanized substitutes for play and for experience be-

cause, without our approval, they introduce our children to human contacts and to aspects of life that seem to us questionable or dangerous. Thus we seem to forget that for generations before "penny dreadfuls" or "funnies" were heard of, the printing press was feared by serious men and women as the agent of mischief—for books brought heresies and strange ideas to upset the normal course of life. We still fear certain books and many parents are unable to make up their minds where to draw the line between permissible and non-permissible reading. But we no longer condemn all books. We discriminate. We take books for granted, but seek ways of getting their benefits and of reducing their disadvantages and dangers.

Radio and movies, too, cannot be approved or condemned as if they had uniform and permanent virtues or vices. Like the printing press or machine technology, like the arts and the sciences, they exist and they operate without moral prejudice; they are instruments which human beings may use more or less effectively, more or less wisely, more or less destructively. The tool is neither good nor bad; it is for us to use discriminatingly.

The need is not only for adults to master these tools, to acquire discriminations, but for parents to acquire a new skill in guiding children toward achieving their own tastes and discriminations. The same amplifier brings us the President's inaugural address, the international hookup of important world events and the symphony concert, and along with these, low comedy, blood and thunder melodrama and impossible stories of fantasy and adventure.

Older Children More Exacting

Studies and observation have shown that as the child grows older, he becomes more exacting and more selective, no matter what the parents may think of his dis-

crimination or taste. The importance of this for the home is brought out by the fact that children who have already developed considerable discrimination with respect to reading seem to have entirely different tastes with regard to radio or movies. A girl of fifteen can listen with adults to the best music; but she listens with her eleven-year-old brother to radio stories she would disdain to read.

We have to accept the fact that discrimination, and even taste, does not necessarily develop at an even pace or carry over from one medium to another. Often, indeed, it seems that the children's critical faculties are suspended as concerns one particular medium of entertainment. Perhaps it is because our young people approach what is being offered them with a different attitude from the one we have learned. An intellectual boy of twelve, whose reading tastes were mature and discriminating, witnessed a rather mediocre movie in the company of his mother. The mother had been bored, and afterward pointed out that the picture had been inexcusably stupid, the plot inconsistent, the ages of its characters confused, the action hackneyed. But the boy had been perfectly satisfied. To her criticism he protested: "But mother—you don't go to a movie in the right spirit! You should just let it wash over you!"

Time for Growth

Perhaps we are not trained to let things "wash over" us—but our children *are*. Radio and movies are modern contributions to childhood as well as to adult life, and a new generation is learning to listen and look in ways we never learned, and to develop its own criteria of value as well as its own discriminations and immunities.

We have ample evidence, however, that many parents find it difficult to maintain their faith in the child's innate powers of growth and development. Such comments as

the following are typical of the attitude with which many parents face the "onslaughts" of the radio.

"How can I prevent my boy from listening to programs that are not good for him? He simply will not take my advice. I wish they were off the air entirely. These programs are not only a hindrance but they corrupt my boy's morals. He tries to imitate and repeat certain words. He talks about guns and gangs, usually saying 'stick 'em up'."

And again: "Many of us with children from seven on are perfectly frantic over the effect of the radio on our children. The programs are sensational nonsense and the children are made nervous and develop fears they never had before." One mother says her children have developed a feeling of evil in the world.

We may well question whether these parental fears are wholly warranted—or at least whether the radio is itself the source of the difficulty. That the choices or tastes of children differ from those of their parents, or of adults generally, must be accepted without prejudice here, as in the case of other experiences. The child is a developing organism and we must not expect of him the appreciations and tastes of maturity. The issue is the same, whether it has to do with reading, or radio, or movies, or any other means of communicating ideas and sentiments. In matters of taste we have to recognize that while there are great individual differences in sensitivity, each child has to develop discrimination by trying out what is offered on many levels. The crude and primitive elements in the comics and in the games of children seem to serve some deep inner need. The child cannot skip any of these stages, as many parents would like; he has to go through with the trivial and the crude, and pass at his own pace from childish things to finer appreciations and preferences.

This is not to say, however, that the content of these programs and their effects are of no consequence, or that whatever the children find acceptable must be considered suitable; for at every stage of development there are degrees of discernment. Moreover, if we believe that discrimination grows with experience, there must be opportunities for the child to experience the finer things as well as the cruder.

Varying Needs

In large measure children's preferences represent certain types of needs. There is the exploratory interest—the child wants to know all he can find out about all phases of life. Stories about people, even quite ordinary people, will supply this to some extent. Accounts of what is happening—the "news"—will satisfy another phase of the same need. Curiosity about various types of occupations and the activities of various classes of people of whom they have heard serve to round out their expanding pictures of the world. This exploratory interest passes imperceptibly into the adventure stage, in which the child can identify himself with some hero, can admire the cleverness of his imaginary associates, can wonder what he would do under similarly difficult circumstances. The radio is one of the instruments through which the growing individual can share the experience of others and so grow in stature and understanding. The child is not aware that he is seeking vicarious expansion of his own personality; for him it is sufficient that he likes it. It is for parents and educators to recognize that there are values here, notwithstanding frequent crudities or extravagances. That is, it is more important for us to know just what goes on inside the child than to classify programs as approved or disapproved.

Neither adults nor children can convey clearly and con-

vincingly the "reasons" for their preferences or dislikes, and when challenged, both will try to justify their tastes on the basis of generally accepted principles. It is beyond dispute, however, that many of the programs are objectionable because they convey false ideals or misleading sentimentalities, or because they "murder the King's English" or play too recklessly with elemental fears and horrors. In their admonitions and exhortations, some of which are offered ostensibly to help parents in the training of their children, many are too crude and psychologically unsound. Parents may rightfully object to the kind of radio advice sometimes offered to children on the management of their problems and on the conduct of life generally. And no excuse can be found for some of the methods used to impress upon children their obligation to promote the sales of the merchandise advertised by the sponsors of the program which they like.

The worries of parents in regard to radio are serious, and their grievances for the most part warranted; but there is so much of the hysterical among the criticisms that we have to be particularly careful to envisage the problem in its entirety.

We might compare the radio with the cinema and find common features, of a kind that continue to worry parents in regard to both, as well as contrasts that suggest problems peculiar to the radio. The cinema, for example, like the radio, presents its message simultaneously to large numbers. And because of this mass appeal, both tend to design their programs on the common denominators of human interest—which are not very lofty. But in contrast to the cinema, the radio is an ever-present challenge—to use or not to use, to select much or little—whereas "going to the movies" depends, at least for younger children, on the decision of their elders. Even where, as with older children, it involves a frequent need

to choose between programs, the cinema lends itself to relatively easy adjustment and compromise. But the radio may call for half a dozen decisions of an evening and no alternative can be postponed to another time.

Some Questions of Management

The specific problems of the radio are those that have to do, on the one hand, with the home—adjusting time, choice of program, mutual consideration among the members of the family, conflict with other activities; and, on the other hand, with the quality and character of the broadcasting as it affects the growing personalities of eventual citizens.

Like reading and the movies and parties and other recreational activities, the radio calls upon the parents to guide children in making choices—when, what, how much? But we cannot be arbitrary; we cannot set up rules, such as "only until six o'clock", for sometimes a child's particular favorite comes on at six. Both forbidding and permitting are meaningless unless they are parts of sympathetic counsel and guidance.

A new instrument or medium always brings difficulties that cannot be solved on the basis of earlier experiences or earlier criteria of conduct. Many literary masterpieces, such as Mark Twain's classics of child life, at first aroused the hostility of adults, only to become "required reading" in the public schools.

Children preponderantly show enthusiasm for a kind of program which parents as a whole view unfavorably with about the same unanimity. The thriller, the mystery, the comedy (not so high), the exciting crime and horror series—all these are seized upon by the children with an avidity that leaves the parents aghast. We have to ask ourselves what it is that gives children so much satisfaction in some of the things most disapproved by their

elders, and so common in the radio programs. From numerous studies of many different kinds, as well as from the insight of competent observers, we are coming to recognize that the exciting adventures, and even the terrifying episodes, which leave children trembling and yet demanding more, satisfy something corresponding to the child's stage of development, to his personal or temperamental make-up, or to the gaps in his experience. Like reading itself, which we value and encourage, like the best in drama, these disapproved excitements are forms of vicarious adventure, substitute expansions of experience that fulfill an inner need which the child can neither express nor disregard. In extreme cases of excessive addiction to the radio or to particular types of programs, the parents may well consider the child's behavior as symptomatic of a condition that may need closer and more discerning study, rather than harsher penalties and restrictions.

Drives and Desires

Instead of looking upon children's radio interests as indications of something in itself bad, we might find it helpful to consider them as manifestations of normal drives and desires that must in one way or another be satisfied—and that are there, radio or no radio. It is trite to repeat that one man's meat is another man's poison; it is, nevertheless, necessary to remind ourselves that a very exciting thriller which sends Edwin to the verge of hysterics sends Edgar to happy dreams of success and victory. A continuous melodramatic serial holds some children spellbound day after day; and other children of the same age and background find the same series a deadly bore. We might dismiss these facts, if we liked, as illustrating the differences in tastes about which sensible people never attempt to argue; but they also

represent differences in needs and in capacities to utilize various experiences, differences in sensitivity and in modes of apprehending.

A college professor reports that his ten-year-old son can listen to any hair-raising radio thriller that may be on just before his bedtime and then drop off at once into a dreamless and untroubled sleep. But let him read an aviation magazine and he lies awake most of the night. Perhaps even the frequent and serious charge that their programs disturb children's sleep must be answered not in terms of radio alone but of other elements in their environment as well.

The individual differences in the unconscious demands of children are illustrated by two intelligent boys, brothers eight and five years old. They had been taken to see the sound film "Treasure Island," and were asked what they liked best in the picture. The older boy, in a dreamy voice, said, "I loved the way the ships pulled out, when it was getting dark, and the clouds." The younger boy, with an angel face, said, "I liked the shooting best. Oh, boy, oh, boy! Was that some shooting!"

However satisfactory the first, or shocking the second reaction may seem to adults, we can draw from them no conclusions whatever as to either the personalities into which these children are to grow, or the background in which they are developing. We can be confident only that the experience was of genuine value in different ways for each child.

Socializing Experience

There are other aspects of children's interest which have to be distinguished from the fascination of the instrument or of the programs. Younger children are often observed to listen with older brothers or sisters or with their parents to programs which we may be sure they do

not find particularly alluring. Here the companionship of the older members of the family, and the sense of sharing an experience with them, are satisfactions that children will try to get, even at a sacrifice. It is true that in many homes the radio does introduce difficulties because the preferences of the several children cannot all be satisfied or reconciled. At the same time many parents report that the radio has established a bond of common interest between older and younger children and has thus contributed to family harmony rather than added conflicts.

The "intruder" is not, therefore, uniformly condemned. Not only does the radio often serve to unify the members of the family by furnishing a variety of common experiences, but it sometimes furthers the parents' purposes. Thus, one family feels that the radio "is valuable as an adjunct to the education and entertainment of the household." Another parent writes, "I feel that my children's great interest in music has been encouraged by radio. . . . With so much to choose from, they learn to be discriminating."

These and other examples suggest that the problem of managing the radio in the home is part of the larger problem of living together in a household made up of individuals of different ages and tastes. Many parents are aware that setting up rules designed to work automatically and permanently is less constructive than the continuous working *with* children.

Many of the questions raised by parents in regard to radio are, in effect, not problems of radio at all, but problems of home management. The strains reported in many cases are the results of parents' efforts to regulate the child's behavior, including his use of the radio, by arbitrary rules.

"I ordered my twelve-year-old boy not to turn on the

radio before dinner, but I found that he had been listening to the radio and shutting it off just before I got home." This suggests that in many homes the radio is not itself the problem it appears to be, but merely the precipitant for deep-seated tensions in the family situation. In this case, for example, we cannot suppose that the boy's disregard of his mother's "orders" was confined to the radio.

Interference in the Family

The most serious and most common complaint against the radio as part of the home equipment is its frequent interference with other interests and activities. Family conversation is the greatest sufferer, with reading and music practice close seconds. Other losses frequently mentioned by parents are group games, creative play, crafts, singing, and so on. This is perhaps a competition which we must learn to accept as legitimate—and as a challenge to the more time-honored activities to justify their continuance as family diversions.

Sometimes the "interference" does not take the form of completely stopping other home activities or pleasure. The radio may become merely the audible background against which everything else is done. Some children turn on the radio as soon as they come home from school, and leave it on continuously for hours. Parents are worried, because they feel that the sounds must somehow interfere with whatever it is the child is doing, or that this constant distraction must be injurious to his inner serenity.

While we can understand the concern and the fears of the parents, it is impossible to condemn the practice universally. It may be injurious in particular cases; but there is evidence that individuals vary as to both their motives and their reactions. One girl comes home from school when there is nobody else in the house; the radio gives her friendly assurance of invisible companionship; it is

perhaps no better and no worse than a young child's reliance upon muffled voices in the next room as assurance that all is well. In the case of some individuals the continuous radio sounds seem to serve very much like a rhythmic undertone, or perhaps a melodic obbligato to their activities, including mental activities. At any rate, it is almost certain that in a few of the cases studied the continuous accompaniment of radio music has actually helped in the work going on.

Multiple Issues

It is helpful to distinguish between the content of the radio's contribution to the child's entertainment, and the problems of managing the child's time and the family's comfort and convenience. If we make this distinction we can more easily get the children's cooperation when adjustment and compromise are necessary. They can understand that it is impossible to have two programs at the same time to suit different individuals, and that there are times when we must have relative silence. This makes it easier to consider on their own merits questions of taste.

A radio program had been passed upon as acceptable by the parents of a ten-year-old boy—this was the one feature that he could have. Unfortunately, however, it came at six-thirty, the regular dinner hour. The father was sorry; but it did not occur to him to suggest postponing the dinner hour fifteen minutes. Yet why not? Merely because it was customary to eat at this time? The dinner hour itself is not sacred, but is determined, like so many details, by circumstances, which may often be adjusted without upsetting the family's convenience.

But here again we must be clear about our own attitudes.

In one family an adjustment was made as to hours and preferences by giving the children their supper earlier on

the evenings of their favorite radio program. The mother was rather proud of having found a liberal compromise for letting the children listen to what they wished: "They can listen to that stuff after their supper if they like—but I certainly don't have to listen *with* them, do I? So I leave the room. Don't you think that's a good plan?" The answer to this query is to be found in another question: "In what tone of voice do you leave the room?" If, in leaving, your manner says more clearly than words—"Maybe you can enjoy this tripe, but I will have none of it!" you imply that their taste is bad. This will fail to impress them—will, on the contrary, only make them question your judgment. If, on the other hand, your manner suggests that now the children may give themselves over to enjoyment of their programs without fear of intruding on others' time or attention, your implied respect for their preferences and their right to this enjoyment will be more likely to increase their respect for your criticisms, if and when you find these necessary. At any rate, nothing is gained by disparaging what we adults dislike. We must contrive somehow to find a balance between giving the child something on his own present level of appreciation, and helping him to explore what we consider the better values in the enjoyments life offers.

These, then, are some of the problems of management which the home must face in making a place for these so-called "invaders of the home". To these are added questions as to the content of the radio broadcasts and movies and their supposed effects upon children.

No Program "Good" or "Bad" for All

We do not yet know very much about what actually happens to the individual child as a result of listening to one or another broadcast, or seeing one picture or another. With the growth of our understanding of child-

hood, the schools have been giving up the familiar concept of the "average child"—who is notoriously nonexistent. Both radio and movies however, still address themselves to this "average". And from their very nature they perhaps can never do otherwise. On the other hand, the child in the home is a unique personality, and must be so treated by the parents.

At the time the Walt Disney version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was taking the country by storm, many parents were concerned about its "terror" elements. Some even reported that their children hid their eyes at certain points when dangers seemed to be closing in on the heroine; others that the experience was followed by nightmares. Yet the majority of children sat unblinking through it—terror and all. One robust four-year-old, who seemed to have enjoyed it hugely, was asked how she liked Snow White. "I love her, I love her, I love her!" was the emphatic reply. "And how did you like the witch?" With equal enthusiasm and just as promptly she said, "I hate her, I hate her, I hate her!" How can we know that the releasing of these two elementary passions has not its own positive, if immeasurable, values? As with their reading, so with their movie-going and radio-listening, we have to know what each particular child can "take".

There is probably no program that is "good" for all children, or "bad" for all children. Moreover, the conditions of the times and the child's background may influence both the appeal and the effect of a program. The speed which characterizes exciting radio features is part of the age in which our children live; and they do not need to make the adjustments which their parents apprehend.

A little girl of ten had been listening consistently and eagerly to Buck Rogers, and to his impossible fantasies. The mother, thinking to take advantage of the child's

interest and redirect it to a higher level, introduced her to Jules Verne. These writings the daughter declared dull and "slow". In part the difference between the Buck Rogers appeal and the Jules Verne appeal may be set down to the fact that much of the French writer's fantasy has come to be commonplace; and in part to the great difference in tempo as compared to the modern presentation. Besides, if we had the record before us we should see that many parents of a past generation were just as much disturbed by their children's absorption in Jules Verne.

Another mother objected to Buck Rogers because she feared it would arouse her boy's contempt for present-day living through the constant glorification of the Twenty-fifth Century; but science teachers reported that it aroused interest in science among girls as well as boys.

Guidance Methods Vary

Even among families which have assimilated the radio on some—for them—satisfactory basis, there is likely to be little agreement as to what that basis should be. Four mothers, all professionally trained in education and psychology, were earnestly discussing what each of them did about one particularly hair-raising adventure-serial. One said frankly that the children had given it up out of kindness to her: "It disturbs me, and since it comes at our dinner hour I can't leave the room. So they are cheerfully content with a second best at another hour." The second said that her only radio rule was a time limit: "I tell them they can listen for half an hour every evening, and since they happen to want this 'shocker', I don't interfere—and it does them no harm." The other two said their children settled the whole question themselves. One, whose child is an only child, reported that he bravely listens when his mother is at home; but when she happens

to be out, he'd rather not. In the last family the sensitive—and sensible—ten-year-old announced that she didn't like to be scared, and regularly left the room while her older brother enjoyed his thrills unmolested.

Because children differ so tremendously in the temperaments and prior experiences they bring to any given situation, it is impossible to predict what a specific exposure —to books, to movies, to radio—will impress upon them. Nor can the influence of imaginary characters upon the behavior of our children be directly inferred from the conduct of those characters.

Effects Vary

It is equally impossible to make sure, from either the parents' observations or the children's, whether the direct effect of a given program is desirable or undesirable. Many parents, for instance, feel that news or current events programs are less overstimulating than imaginative stories. Yet many times a year the "news" includes highly dramatic episodes: A plane crash, by an eyewitness or the sole survivor; brave men fighting a forest fire directed by radio, from a helicopter; the rescue of a crew from a sunken submarine, by an expert blow-by-blow reporter. Indeed the expert makes even athletics and races as stirring as the wildest imaginings, so that the listener meets every blow with his heartbeat.

Probably the "good" effects upon children's characters are as unpremeditated as the "bad". Since we have not yet found any sure way, through our didactic teaching or other devices, to make our children "good", we may at least suspect that some of the objectionable lessons are equally ineffective in making them "bad". The occasional testimony of a young delinquent that he "got the idea from the movies" is certainly not to be depended upon as an accurate accounting for his motivations.

The radio has brought a fundamental challenge to *all* teaching. Certainly it is a hopeful sign to find more and more parents taking the attitudes of which the following comment is representative:

"I am one of the mothers who feels that radio presents no problem at all—my experience being that children grow out of the stage of listening to 'trashy' programs as easily and satisfactorily as they grow out of the pulp magazine and 'trashy' serials in their reading. Like whooping cough, it's a self-limiting disease and time takes care of it. Whether they listen or not is of less importance than the necessity that we, through our own *heart* interest and appreciation, consistently direct the development of taste and lead them to broader fields of interest and enjoyment."

What Is Too Much?

There remains, of course, the question of the *amount* of movie-going and radio-listening. What is enough? What is too much? Here again it is impossible to answer categorically, since what is enough for one may be too much for another. It is necessary to know the individual child, and, more than that, to know what are the satisfactions he is finding in these forms of entertainment.

How impossible it is to solve our problems with general rules is illustrated by a mother who had prohibited movies entirely for her little girl. When after a time this mother considered the child mature enough, or the movies harmless enough, to warrant a gradual introduction of the one to the other, she announced to her child that she would take her to the movies two times that season!

Why was it necessary to plan this child's movie schedule a year in advance, or to fix a number? And what magic lay in the number chosen? Who could predict that two movies would be the correct dosage for a child of

a given age in a given time-span? There might be only one suitable movie that year, there might be three—there might even be two in rapid succession on the movie timetable. It was necessary only to decide each occasion of movie-going on its own merits as to time and suitability.

A certain amount of vicarious outlet is needed by us all. We may not know how much is *enough* for any given child, but it is often possible to see what is *too much*. Too much listening, too much movie-going, are often symptomatic of a sterile program for the child's daily interests and activities. In families and in communities which really make an effort to offer their children other outlets and real experiences, radio and movies will readily take their proportionate place in the child's life. An available workbench, a well-equipped place to play, opportunities for dancing and dramatics, and occasional special treats and trips to interesting places—all these may serve to keep the balance between vicarious and real experiences. For the child busy with the constructive or creative arts, movies and radio may well serve as a stimulus and inspiration.

If, on the other hand, we offer children all this, and still the movies and the radio offer a too great and too continuous lure, we must seek more deeply for the fundamental reasons for their appeal. We cannot always alter the child's needs nor the ways he finds for meeting these. It may well be that his need for escape, or for the excitement of this dramatic stimulus, is both valid and irremediable. And in that case we must recognize this as the child's own—and perhaps helpful—"way out".

As children grow older, and can go to movies on their own, it becomes even more difficult to make rules in advance. How many movies is "enough"? We may set certain arbitrary, but experimental, limits; but we must be

prepared to have circumstances alter cases. For example, a twelve-year-old girl goes to the movies every Saturday—no matter what the picture—because her "set" goes. If that is her only social contact, or her preferred one, any parental prohibition of particular pictures would only seem to disparage her friends' taste. If a thoroughly objectionable picture is announced for a certain Saturday, the mother must bestir herself to find an adequate substitute. Some particularly exciting treat can surely be found as diversion for that day. Sometimes a cooperative effort among the parents of such a group will substitute parties, picnics, hikes, a dramatic club or some other interest for the regular Saturday movie.

Dangers of Censorship

There can be no question, then, as to the needs of children for a great variety of substitute experiences and adventures; and these needs cannot be ignored in any concerted efforts to improve the radio fare offered to children. Actually there has been notable improvement in radio, both in technique and in artistry. But when groups of parents, having become self-conscious and indignant, undertake to "clean up" matters by using their united powers in an attack on the radio or on special programs of which they disapprove, there is grave danger of defeating their own ends. Such drives are just as objectionable as the thing they are intended to remedy; for the imposition upon the public of a hard-and-fast special view or preference is hardly an improvement upon the present situation which these very groups so deeply deplore. We gain nothing from such a censorship by any group that has the power to exert special pressure. The negative approach, although it is understandable as a manifestation of outraged feelings, is in the long run unproductive.

It is hardly safe for parents to censor what is offered to the public on the assumption that any of them already knows what is best for all of us and all of our children, especially as there are obviously a great variety of views as to what actual effects are produced upon children by this or that type of picture, this or that broadcast feature. Almost any item can draw the complete gamut of judgments from *terrible* to *excellent.*

If some children are decidedly upset by a mystery thriller, shall we then declare that such thrillers shall never be broadcast? Some children are decidedly upset or misled by nursery rhymes and fairy tales and by commonplace fiction. We nevertheless continue to tell them tales and to teach them to read for themselves.

The Comics

Before parents generally could settle down comfortably with the problems which the movies and the radio created for them, a third intruder began to worry them. The so-called "comic books", growing to the dimensions of a major industry, came to be a serious concern to American parents. In the late forties, it was estimated that 8 out of 9 children in the age group eight to twelve years were avid readers, and even collectors, of the comics. Over 60 million comic books were sold each month to children and adults. The extent of their appeal has puzzled psychologists and teachers as well as parents.

Considered objectively, the comics appeal through their simple patterns of form and color, with a minimum of "reading", by presenting action and suspense in terms that children can easily follow. To parents and teachers, the story or drama in these picture sequences deals with extremely fantastic and impossible happenings—and therefore contribute nothing of value to the child's information or to his appreciation of cultural matters. To

the children, however, these excursions into the fantastic do not reach very far beyond the realities, which today include radar, flight exceeding the speed of sound, the bursting of atoms.

These books undoubtedly furnish children many of the values for which all people go to the theater, listen to the radio, watch movies or athletic games or fights—or read books. They yield relaxation, vicarious adventure, information, escape from the humdrum or from the disagreeable. A great many of the comics deal frankly with violence and crime, as does much of literature, and especially the fairy tales and folk tales and legends which have served the needs of past generations. The problem is disturbing to parents because it comes at a time when we have not yet absorbed the impact of those other two invaders, the movies and the radio. Parents naturally feel that whatever is objectionable in these influences is now almost inescapable. Certainly, any child who is exposed to the simultaneous bombardment of so much excitement and stimulation from the action and suspense of those "impossible stories" needs to be protected as well as guided.

Whatever else parents may consider undesirable, these three media lure the children when they are in great need of active work and play, and especially of a chance to share with their fellows in various projects and adventures. The radio, comics and movies offer the child excitement and stimulation, which he wants and needs; but they compel him to enjoy their attractive substitutes passively. The comic book particularly may isolate the child from "reality" because he can enjoy it largely by himself. In this sense, the problem which it presents is very much like that which troubles parents of children who would rather read than play with other children.

Specific criticisms of the comics are directed chiefly to

its "crudities", which are perhaps inseparable from any new effort to reach masses of people. The drawing and coloring are usually crude. The outlines of the stories and the humor are very broad. Adults who never knew the comics in their own childhood or youth do not often take the pains to look below the surface, to become acquainted with the stereotypes or "characters" and the symbols. Parents in this position feel helpless because they can offer nothing more than blanket disapproval or prohibition, or an arbitrary rationing of time for "indulging" in what they disapprove. But they must find some way of helping their children grow—in taste, in discrimination, in capacity to use their own judgment, budget their own time among all the possible ways of having fun, budget their own spending among all the allurements reaching out for their nickels and dimes.

These problems are new only because the instruments are new. Essentially, they are as old as the art of entertainment or storytelling. When a mother reads to two or more children, the interest is likely to vary, the effect is likely to vary, the immediate or the later emotional response is likely to vary. Children have their preferences and they have their tender spots. The radio and screen and comics must provide a still wider range—of subjects, treatments, styles, emphases, and moods—to supply the mass.

It is not merely that there are varied needs and varied tastes; each individual needs to find out from his own samplings, yes, from his own mistakes and sufferings, what is of lasting worth to him. It is indeed the only way to find out. Moreover, while we may properly refuse to dispute about tastes, modern psychology suggests to us that they correspond to something deeper than we commonly assume. The impossible thriller or the silly story

that tries the patience of the adult may fulfill a real need for the child now; but, like other childish things, he will cast it aside in time. One's sensibilities may become dulled to what is shocking, and one's ideas may change as to what is amusing. And aside from the relative value of one or another feature of the entertainment program, the child as well as the parent needs to learn, without acquiring either a sour-grape inferiority or a condescending superiority, that there are different people with different tastes.

It is possible to help children find progressively better music, better entertainment, better drama, whether through the radio or through any other channels. It is indeed necessary for parents to develop within the home the controls and the discriminations that the wide range of available material demands. The child who "listens in" constantly to all that comes over the air, like the child who is a voracious and omnivorous reader, is not only taking the "bad" along with the "good"; he needs help toward finding a spiritual fare that is better balanced and equally attractive.

XII

THE MODERN MOTHER'S DILEMMA

Most young women, when they get married, look forward to the role of wife and mother as the most significant and most satisfying role. Yet increasingly, young mothers are bewildered by a certain incongruity. The Family is universally glorified as society's "basic institution", yet everybody seems indifferent to what happens to families—other people's children and their homes. Indeed, the "public" is amazingly tolerant. The needs of actual families are consistently disregarded by multitudes of adult men and women pursuing their own private interests—by men and women who are themselves heads of families.

There is nothing new in the idea that modern woman suffers from a deep conflict about motherhood. This conflict has been described in great detail in a long succession of studies from the psychological and psychoanalytical points of view. Without going into the fine points of these discussions, it seems clear that a primitive instinct urges woman to follow her innate destiny, yet newly developed aspirations for her own personality clash with this basic desire. Some women solve this conflict in a negative way—that is, by avoiding parenthood and following a smooth, straight working career. The vast majority of women, however, undoubtedly want children: and in ever-increasing numbers they want *also*

—if possible—a chance to share in the stimulating practical and cultural activities of their adult contemporaries of both sexes. A relatively small number have been able to combine with motherhood and homemaking a respectable amount of civic and cultural achievement and even distinct careers in business, the arts or the professions. But more and more are chafing because they seem to be condemned to an unsatisfactory choice of one *or* the other.

What the Choices Are

We merely evade the dilemma by telling women that they cannot eat their cake and still have it. It is true that as women were being liberated from certain traditional restriction and were attaining opportunities and privileges previously reserved for males, many felt driven to demonstrate their "equality" with men by undertaking full-time careers modeled on what men were doing. The first two or three generations of women privileged to have college educations avoided marriage in large proportions. This was partly because of the "education" they were getting, for male college graduates for some three decades around the turn of the century were also avoiding marriage. But partly, also, these women were saving their talents for something more important. Increasingly, the choice between a career and woman's traditional role as spouse and mother does not offer a satisfactory solution. The astonishing rise in the marriage rate and the birthrate during the few years following World War II should assure us that most girls still look forward to bearing and rearing children, as did girls in the past. We have to recognize that when girls plan special training for jobs or prepare for professional careers, they are merely projecting into the future the historical fact that *most women have always worked.*

The mothers and grandmothers of today's girls worked —not only at home or on the farm or in the shop in front of the home; but they worked in the town and in the homes of other families. And within the memory of the oldest survivors, they worked in industry and business. Now some eighteen million women are at work and they are to be found in virtually all occupations.

In contrast to the girls of earlier times, who left home to marry and to set up homes like those in which they had grown up, girls today typically enter matrimony direct from school or a job. Just before the war, half the girls in the country attaining the age of eighteen years were completing a four-year high school course. Very little of what they were taught in school and very little of what they got from their work experiences outside the home served to prepare them for the tasks ahead. And as members of shrinking families, very few of them had experience with older or younger brothers and sisters, with the activities of a large household. Now they are frequently baffled because they lack a basic understanding of essential human relationships within the home—of what is expected of them as wives and mothers.

Motherhood More Than Another Job

Young women at school or at their various jobs know about where they rate in relation to the standards set. But their fine professional standards and business efficiency turn out to be subtly inadequate and disturbing when they try to apply them to what they call their "new job" of motherhood. Each one finds herself guessing and wondering—and without the benefit of knowing that most of her contemporaries are equally perplexed. Each one has to discover by herself that being a mother is not merely another job. The emotional overtones as well as the specific techniques of child-care are very different

from those of the business world. The objectives and criteria and the competitive strivings of that world have little meaning when applied to the purposes of the home.

Before mothers can make the most of knowledge and reason in bringing up their children, they must have experienced—and taken joy in—the deep primal instincts and physical experiences of maternity. This is where so many earnest young women first lose the path. With all their eagerness to be "advanced", to be modern and efficient, they are not prepared to be primitive, to accept the physical and emotional ties of motherhood which are as old as the race itself. Most women, if they think about the matter at all, want first to fulfill their lives as women. The woman with outside work and a satisfactory married life has always considered her job secondary to her home in a subjective and spiritual sense. It may sound sentimental to say that her heart is where her treasure is; but her sentimental preoccupations may turn out to be quite as dynamic as anything she accomplishes with her "work". However, she resents having to choose between being a woman and being a cultivated person taking part in our civilization. So far, we have neither assured women the opportunity to carry out their distinctive tasks and desires, nor permitted them to work out fairly a satisfactory compromise between outside work and making a home.

To call motherhood a job or even a profession is to lend it at best a specious dignity. Motherhood is worthy enough in its own name; its importance is not enhanced by attacking its tasks in a professional spirit. And besides, it simply is not a profession. It is true that with intelligence and training, with an understanding of some of the things that science has brought to us, with a knowledge of available resources, a modern mother can accomplish a great deal more than she could otherwise. But intelligence and orderliness and training cannot make her work

with her home and children a profession. A typical profession involves the progressive development of expertness in an ever narrower area, more and more concern with technical details and with refinements of discrimination. In contrast to this mode of development, the mother, in her continuous concern with her children, becomes progressively *less* involved in details, grows into an expanding field of interests—her developing children and the world into which they are growing. After many of the services of the traditional home have been split off and assigned to numerous outside specialists, there remains for the mother of today a continuing relationship of caring and guiding and interpreting which cannot be delegated to others. She is the child's first and most enduring love. From her care springs his fundamental sense of security. She must, throughout his childhood, continue to be the integrating influence amid a confusion of teachings and experiences and pressures. It is she who will give him a sense of stability in the whirling chaos, if he is to achieve it at all. But she will supply a sense of stability not so much by clinging steadfastly to the fixed absolutes of a fading past as by continuously accepting the ever-changing world and adjusting herself to it.

Full-Time Mothers

Many women are never troubled by having to choose. They take on the responsibilities of home making as a matter of course. Many enjoy the work and get satisfaction out of the process and out of the results. They feel themselves using their talents and their training to good purpose. They manage to use their leisure time satisfactorily: they envy none of their sisters. And it has been shown that in many cases a competent mother of young children actually "earns" more than she could possibly earn at a commercial job considerably above the

average. Many young mothers who had worked before marrying and hoped to continue at some work for part-time, found that they could not earn enough to replace their home work without neglecting their children or themselves.

Under the most satisfactory arrangements, however, the full-time mother and homemaker meets certain problems that belong in the present-day situation. In the small family and household—which means most of the actual family units—a full-time mother finds that the young child literally needs her more hours a day than either she or her husband had anticipated. Again and again the fulltime provider, spending specified hours at his job outside, is forced to wonder to himself why it takes the wife all day and running over to look after a small house and only one child, whereas his grandmother with six children and no modern conveniences seemed to take it in her stride. But the wife wonders too: for her grandmother had a similar reputation. Unless the two get together on the subject instead of wondering reproachfully or guiltily, they may find things getting harder.

One thing fathers and mothers should both understand clearly: it isn't fair to compare the present home, with all its physical and technical advantages, with the home that grandmother ran; or to measure tasks and results according to the number of children. For one thing, in the old-fashioned home on its acres, each child was an asset almost from the time he could walk, instead of being an added cost as well as a burden to look after. We city folks find it hard to understand how a tot could earn his keep; but that's not the point, for he couldn't. But a row of children of assorted sizes added to the efficiency and resourcefulness of the adults. Only the toddler had to be spared to mind the baby, as a rule. That left older children and adults to do more difficult

tasks. The children took care of one another down the line. But also they helped out in whatever was going on all the way up the line. Each child could fetch and carry, according to his size. He could hand up a tool or keep materials in order. He could do a fraction of each of several jobs, where now the mother has to do everything herself—including odds and ends that even little children could do just as well. And that's one reason, incidentally, why "saving steps" is such a big concern for the modern mother, even in a small household.

Size itself is an important difference between today's home and grandmother's. The large household usually contained a number of aunts or cousins or grandparents who could lend a hand at all sorts of tasks. The baby-sitter has become an institution only very recently; and many a full-time mother would cherish a baby-sitter during the day—but not for sitting. Today's mother, in her small home with only one child, is filling in all the working hours as did her grandmother, and in addition she has to do what children might otherwise be doing and also various odd jobs that other adults might be doing. Under these conditions, the full-time mother does not ordinarily get all the rest she needs or the time she wants for herself —or a satisfying enthusiasm for her husband's leisure.

Perhaps the most difficult of the unexpected features of the modern mother's job is its isolation. In most cases this means a real privation that even the uninterrupted radio cannot compensate for: for while you like to hear the radio, you cannot talk back. The constant companionship of immature minds leaves most women hungry for something that in another period was supplied for in all except the actually isolated pioneer homes. Women in some regions would meet over the washing at the edge of the river. They would get together for quilting or husking. The large home itself was a constant center of human

contacts. Even women without special educational advantages feel the isolation as a spiritual privation. Looking back over our history, we are not astonished to learn that about sixty or seventy years ago, the group that furnished more than its quota to the insane asylum was that of "farm wives"—but those were wives of homesteaders who were literally on their own.

Many women say quite frankly that they always feel guilty if they arrange to leave home to take part in some civic or public undertaking—like playing hooky. "Every hour I spend away from the children, I feel that I ought to be at home." Yet in all their training and practical experience before marriage or childbearing they took association with others for granted. Any dissatisfaction with this lonesomeness, or with the very fact that one misses companionship, is likely to affect the relationship with the children and with the husband.

A small family is more demanding today than the large family was in the past, for two reasons. Having only one or two or three children makes each mother feel that she has to do something exceptional with each one, for each one. Each child is really *worth* more and calls for more attention and service. But in addition, the changes in modern life have raised our standards tremendously—we demand more of ourselves. Every mother wants for her children the best that can be had—better health care, better food, better clothes, better toys and books and athletics and amusement, better education than people ever had in the past. This is natural and wholesome. Unfortunately, people will take advantage of this motherly weakness and confuse parents as to what is really the best for their particular children, in their particular situation. The inner drive to get the best presents a continual problem. There are conflicting claims and pressures and uncertainties when choices are to be made, for nobody can afford "everything" and no child can

take in everything. Both the chance to concentrate on the small number and the desire to shower upon each child more than is possible add to our dissatisfactions.

As children grow older, parents are called upon to serve them in new ways: they have to double as companions and friends—and that isn't easy or effective. The child needs, in addition to the affections and friendliness of the parents, companions of his own age. He can not only play with them, but can learn from them through a language and experience which parents do not supply. He can fight and make up. He can learn to give and take on his own level. He can enlarge his horizon, his ideas, his vocabulary from those other children, each of whom brings something out of a different home.

The concentration of the mother's attention and time on one or a few children does something else to the child himself. It tends to exaggerate his own sense of importance. On the one hand, the mother limits her own personal development by confining herself so closely to the interests of the child, to conversation with the child. On the other hand, it holds the child back in his development: it gives him no chance or incentive to strike out on his own, to take on responsibilities, to experiment, since everything he needs is being done for him so competently and intelligently—all he has to do is to follow the rules and enjoy himself. By now everybody has heard of the damage that the "Moms" have done to their children and of the harm the Moms are doing to themselves.

We cannot set up the best achievements of full-time mothers and homemakers of the past as a goal for present-day mothers of the typical small home, small family —and small income. If we did, we should probably fall far short of using our actual resources to the full, either by wearing ourselves out physically and emotionally or by driving from us the children we are anxious to serve. For as more and more children are getting modern

schooling and other educational and cultural advantages, they will find it harder and harder to live with a middle-aged woman who has refused to keep up with the times, with the movements of current life in which these children want to take an active part.

Particularly will the daughters of these devoted mothers be troubled. For the picture which young people see of the middle-aged woman is often far from pretty. It must suggest to older boys and girls a hopeless round of struggle to get the next generation to do the same for its children. Many of our children are smart enough to see that their parents are stretching out the job of bringing the youngsters up to a certain level: we are making a lifetime job of it, too often, without adding anything worth mentioning at the latter half.

The work of the mother for her children normally changes the relationship between them. The service she renders, her protection, care, even counseling, should gradually taper off, as they become less dependent and more self-reliant. As the children grow, they want to be able to deal with their parents more and more as equals, eventually as mature adults on exactly the same footing. In this change of relationships, the mother can serve the child most effectively if she herself becomes through the years more and more of a person.

To a considerable degree, the effectiveness of a mother will depend upon the extent to which she grows along with her children, retaining their confidence and respect as well as their love, and preparing herself to free them to live their own lives.

The Part-Time Mother

The woman who tries to carry two jobs—the home and the outside—is in some ways worse off. She wears herself down with work and anxiety and then feels that

she hasn't done either job as well as she wanted to. She has a double chance to feel defeated and dissatisfied. Yet the number of women working outside the home has passed the 18 million mark, and most of them have no choice—they must work. And this applies increasingly to married women and to mothers. Many mothers have been finding out that part of the worry is unnecessary as it is based on the false assumption that the number of hours they spend with their children is a measure of their quality as mothers.

Whether she works because she wants to or because she has to, it is helpful for the mother to recognize that she can be a better mother if she does not let herself be completely absorbed in mothering. Past a certain point, the child is better off if he gets a chance to find out that he is not quite the exact center of the universe. Yet that outside job does raise special problems: in very many cases it means that it is being done, however necessary it may be economically, at the expense of the family. Children do suffer in very many cases, as do the relations of husband and wife.

It has become commonplace that working mothers have been held responsible for a considerable amount of juvenile delinquency. It is no longer good form for the magistrate to point his accusing finger at the parents of children brought before him. There is still too little public concern as to the meaning of the situation.

More and more child-care units are being set up. But too often both the general public and the officials look upon these as a makeshift for the children whose mothers just happen to be working, as so many were during the war. Or they look upon such centers as just another of those unfortunate "charity" requirements. In more enlightened communities, child-care centers and nursery school units are developed because the children need

them, whether the mothers go to work or not. In such cases, however, more intelligent mothers who want their children to benefit from them are sometimes reproached for parking their children in the care of other people instead of looking after them themselves. It is necessary for others to know that the child may be better off with his age-mates part of the time than with the best of mothers all the time.

Mothers need a great variety of help with their children, whether or not they themselves have to work for money. This more and more are coming to understand; and both school and health services are steadily expanding to include what was never intended by the founders of our institutions. Parents should be especially conscious of these extensions as meant for the home—a "private" institution—but one on which all our public, social and political institutions rest. Mothers must learn not only what their children need, in addition to good food and housing and clothing and a chance to play and so on: for the more they think of what they would like to do for their children, the more they will find that past a certain point their children can get only what the group or community is willing to get for all the children.

Some Feminine Grievances

Many women complain that nothing in their education prepared them for home tasks. "I had to learn *everything* after the baby came." Others blame their schooling, not so much because it failed to furnish technical equipment for motherhood as because it stirred their thoughts and ideals with such interesting and exciting matters that made the tasks of the home seem prosaically dull and lifeless. They feel that they have been miseducated. "They used to tell us at college," one mother said, "that everything you learn and everything you do to develop

your intellect and personality will prepare you for the greatest profession—that of motherhood. But that just isn't so."

Another says, "It's illogical to give women training and experience along professional lines and then expect them to junk it completely."

"What is the matter," one mother asks, "with a culture which trains women for everything except this one great human task, so that while we are performing it, we feel ourselves of no importance at all—as though we were doing what any female should be able to do with only half a brain?"

The complaints indicate that women are aware of inconsistency or paradox. "Of course, it's easier in some ways to bring up children than it used to be. There are so many short-cuts, like prepared mixtures and strained foods. There are many mechanical conveniences and appliances, too. Much more dependable advice is available and there are better-informed doctors who are sympathetic toward young mothers.

"And yet I never do anything else but housework and baby care," many mothers say. "My husband cannot understand why I get tired when I'm not really doing hard work, and I'm ashamed myself to spend all day at it and have no time for anything else. I feel that I am going to seed. I see almost no one and when my husband comes home, I have only trivial things to tell him."

Various adjustments are being attempted by increasing numbers of individuals—women who are in a position to make choices and to make plans. They are a small minority, numerically, yet they are significant because they are setting standards and evolving patterns which must become available to all women. What kinds of work should married women undertake? What provisions can be made for leaves of absence? What facilities are possible for

the care of children? What kinds of aids, what kinds of guidance must we have to help the individual family adjust to changing patterns? These are some of the questions with which these modern pioneers are grappling. The answers that they find will affect the happiness of the individual, the family, and society.

Man's Place

While woman's scope has been widening and while we have been giving all this concern to her status and her place, a change has been taking place—slowly and almost imperceptibly—in man's status and position in the family. Just because we have been unaware of it, the results in some cases have been all the more devastating. A bigger revolution in family living took place when fathers left the house to be gone all day than when women achieved the vote.

An episode in a suburban home illustrates the effect of the present day father's comings and goings. Father sits at the breakfast table distributing his attention equally between his insistent watch and his resistant son. "Your mother tells me you've been stealing my cigarettes and giving them to the boys. And smoking them too! Fine thing for a son of mine to do! How do you expect me to trust you? How many did you smoke? Who put you up to it?" Without waiting for the answers—if any might be forthcoming—father seizes his paper and his hat and dashes off to make the 7:42, calling back over his shoulder, "I'll have something further to say to you on the subject tonight. A boy who does a thing like that deserves . . ." and is gone, leaving son to ponder on what it is he deserves.

Now, there is nothing new in the stealthy smoking of cigarettes by the youthful. There is nothing new in parents' outraged feelings when their offspring have failed

them in some respect. Yet in this modern drama, in its setting of hurry and tension, there is something subtly new and subtly challenging to the relationships of parents and children. A generation ago the issue would have been fought out then and there, won or lost as the case might be, but finished and the slate cleaned. Father and son would have turned to other things. They would perhaps have met again at dinner, or in the afternoon's chores, and the feelings of the morning might have been erased by other matters of mutual concern. But today this father departs in wrath, leaving behind him a state of sullen suspense. Returning late, after a tiring day at his mysterious "office", he tries to pick up the loose ends of a broken continuity.

With a few episodes of this kind the father loses his way altogether because he feels ineffectual. In view of these new conditions, our procedures and contacts must change their form if we are to escape a devastating situation in which the father is merely a casual visitor or occasional disciplinarian. Since the father does work away from home more and more, the mother often takes entire charge of the household and the children—especially where she does no outside work. Unless she administers the home in the spirit of the father, however, it becomes a matriarchy. That the spirit of an absent father can be kept alive, as an active force in the lives of his children was illustrated in many homes during World War II, while the men were fighting at the front. Women must not use their newly found power to usurp men's place, but must help to work out again mutually satisfying roles for husband and wife.

New Concepts of Parental Role

Still another big change in modern homes developed after father's working hours became subject to outside

regulations. Many young couples find themselves in a situation that gives the husband more free time or leisure than the wife. At times, this imposes a strain upon their relations, since they cannot understand how the situation arose—either in their own family affairs or in the dramatic disarrangement of the American Family. For the present conflict within the family has its roots in the rise of the factory system which has developed into our marvelous modern age of science and technology.

The great hope or promise of the revolutionary division of labor was to be a wonderful blessing for the home. It would reduce and simplify tasks by taking from the home the clumsy loom and washtub, the spinning wheel and soap kettles. That dream has of course not come true, as yet; but it colors our expectations and adds to our disappointments.

Homes have been getting smaller, as families have been getting smaller. At first thought, it would seem that fewer children would mean less work for mother. But after a couple of generations of shrinking families, the few children find themselves with fewer aunts and uncles, fewer cousins, fewer older brothers and sisters. All these vanished relatives used to be counted upon not only to lend a hand a dozen or a hundred times a day, but to play an important role in the education of children, in guiding them in the ways of the clan, in "training" them even in the mysteries of human nature, with which each individual is obliged constantly to have dealings. The extra hands of the larger households of the past usually carried their own share of the cost of living and helped to make family living more secure in many ways.

We know that in spite of fewer children and in spite of labor-saving improvements and conveniences, most mothers have continued to have a very long and wearing working day. For a long time, most fathers were not at

home to witness the unending and exhausting toil of the mothers. The working father and the business father typically came home tired and often worried. He expects to be spared the domestic chores and even the domestic worries. For fifty years the "tired business man" was portrayed in the cartoons as withdrawn into his slippers and newspaper and cigar smoke. His role in the "discipline" of the children had shrunk into a sort of remote-control magic which the mother applied through the formula, "Wait 'til your father comes home!" Beyond that, he had almost nothing to do with the physical details of the establishment.

Shorter working days and greater economic prosperity have combined to bring father home in time to see the baby before he was put to bed; and eventually in time to see what mother had on her hands, so that he just couldn't escape behind the newspaper. The effect of shortening the work day for fathers must be perfectly obvious. But how did spreading prosperity to more and more of the population awaken fathers to the most pressing of mothers' problems? That may seem paradoxical; but the explanation is simple. The more prosperous we are, the harder is it to find women and girls to hire for domestic service, even for occasional or for part-time work. So a combination of circumstances brings father back into the home where he takes his place alongside mother in the joint tasks of maintaining the home and caring for their children.

Fathers are discovering ample compensations for helping with the housework. The whole family keeps growing together and everyone feels more secure. Perhaps the war was the greatest factor in stirring up changes in the ways of fathers. All men in the army shared in the sort of work that housekeepers have always done. As they learned about housework, they thought up efficient

methods that they planned to institute when they returned home. Many a navy man, laboring over his "whites" dreamed of a washing machine in his own home. When these men returned, they jumped right into the household tasks with a new understanding and a new appreciation of the weight of such duties.

Postwar conditions, with veterans seeking ways to earn a living, narrowed still further the cleavage between the sexes in the matter of housekeeping. It was men who thought up a diaper-service laundry in the first place and who made their white trucks a familiar sight in cities and suburbs. By now the ingenious veterans have added "laundromats" where women can take their clothes for a machine wash at a nominal cost. That certainly brings the sexes together on common domestic problems as they discuss bleaches and methods of doing wool blankets. Helping to prepare the baby formula in crowded living quarters, young men soon got the idea of putting this on a commercial basis too. And why not? Our greatest scientists have always known how to feed rats and guinea pigs with a medicine dropper: no one thought their tender ministrations strange or effeminate. Feeding one baby with a bottle is a no less worthy masculine assignment than working out a system for wholesale bottle-feeding of infants.

Another break in the wall separating man and woman in the working world was the establishment of many housecleaning services by veterans. Men will call at your home to wash floors, clean windows, polish furniture, fix venetian blinds, rearrange your closets, cook, serve, or wash dishes. Does any woman scoff at these men for invading the field of female servants? Who's ashamed of the disparaging "sissy" in her gossip? Not these men, secure in their masculinity, who will tell you that it's about time that men did find out how much physical

energy is involved in the jobs that were always relegated to "the weaker sex". And certainly not the women who feel harassed without their help.

There are still some women who feel a bit guilty about letting their husbands help. This is partly because they've become possessive about their household. "This is my job," they think; and when the husband reaches for the dish towel they say "thank you" in a rather shamefaced way. If they truly felt, "Running our home is a common responsibility," any thank you's would merely express reciprocal courtesy which comes naturally between members of the family. Of course the woman who is at home all day is more or less the manager of the establishment. But with men's shorter working hours, and with maid service out of the question, the responsibility for home tasks is being spread through the family.

These many subtle adjustments in family life are being worked out under present-day changing conditions. This is our new pioneering and it can be just as rewarding as building homes in the wilderness. Only through a recognition of all the factors involved in family living today can we give to marriage the permanence and satisfaction we all desire.

XIII

PARENTS ARE PEOPLE

Changes in living, particularly in family living, have raised a clamour that tends to obscure this essential fact: that human beings continue to strive for exactly the same things they have always wanted—and to have the same basic needs. Mature men and women, whether they live on the prairie or in a pent-house, want more than anything to find a wife or husband to share the adventure of living. No matter what form marriage takes, each human being needs someone to care for him continuously, caring just because he is himself and not because he possesses certain qualities or virtues. The most sophisticated, emancipated young woman of today is no whit less concerned with meeting and marrying the right man than was the prim, puritanical girl of the last century who had to pretend she wasn't interested in men at all, though marriage was the one aim of her existence.

While the forces that motivate our behavior remain the same, the form of our behavior itself has changed enormously. Beyond the obvious changes which we have all come to think of as typical of modern life, is one more subtle change which has had far-reaching, if largely unrecognized, effects on family living—the higher expectation for happiness. People are no longer satisfied with the monotony and grind that seemed to be the normal order but a short time ago. The promise of exciting possibilities has stirred in the individual the desire to live

his own life. The world has been finding out more and more about our vast resources for getting fun out of life. Everybody wants his share of thrills and work and adventure. We are today living in a time that emphasizes the importance and value of the individual. All this has had profound effects upon family life. Parents want more for their children. They want more for themselves.

Martyrdom Outmoded

We have a clear picture of the mother of the past who martyred herself for her children, who wanted nothing for herself, who lived only for the family. Today, martyrdom in general is out of fashion and most of us cannot imagine that parents then had their successes and achievement and satisfactions. One of the counts against the traditional home was the frequency with which individuality was destroyed by it. Becoming a parent seemed to mean for many the abnegation of all plans and hopes for further individual expansion. Certainly, for most women it meant that the major satisfactions would have to be found in the family. While parenthood is a very important aspect of adult life, there is a disposition among both men and women to claim something more for themselves as persons. Indeed, many young people today hesitate about marriage because they fear that they will be utterly consumed by the demands of home and children. Young women particularly are not willing to face the prospect of "minding" children as a life work.

Many Choices

There is no longer but a single pattern of family life for all; advancing science and changed economic and social conditions enlarge the range of our choices. Today, for example, marriage does not necessarily entail parenthood. For many this simplifies life considerably.

For those who do choose to become parents, however, the possibility of choice adds to the weight of the responsibility. The result is, in many cases, a greater anxiety, an eagerness to do everything possible for the children, an excessive attention to every detail and a confusing uncertainty and misgiving as to decisions already made.

Parents today not only want more *for* their children, they want more *of* their children—partly because they have had them by choice and partly because they have so few that there is no "room for mistakes". But no matter how we raise our expectations as to what each individual should have and what each individual should be, the stuff of which human beings are made remains the same. Newborn babies come along with the same proportion of pretty ones and bright ones, the same proportion of plain ones and dull ones, the same proportion of "just babies".

Realities Are Stubborn

We need, therefore, a deeper understanding of our expectations about the coming child. It is not uncommon for parents to build up and carry a picture of what their child should be; then the failure of the real child to approximate the dream-child causes serious difficulties. An intelligent mother came to a consultant for help with an excessively timid child. Although this little girl was of superior intelligence, the mother frankly described her as "lacking in charm". The mother was aware that the child needed help but failed to recognize the cause of the difficulty. She had rejected this little girl in favor of a younger child who came up to her dream ideal. In this case the problem was one of re-educating the mother.

Father and mother, both, almost of necessity, build in their dreams images of the child they want—and the two images are not identical. Wanting a child very often means to the individual wanting a boy or a girl specifi-

cally, and being unprepared for a child of the opposite sex. Or it means wanting a dream-child resembling slightly a loved person or even a favorite doll of the early years, and being unprepared for a real child with straight hair or the wrong coloring. Often it means wanting a child like oneself—or like the self one longed to be.

According to tradition, every mother is assumed to be enchanted by her baby, and many fathers, as well as mothers, undoubtedly feel a special affection for their own babies from the very beginning. Although parents may have very strong preferences for a boy or girl, these are generally passing. Fortunately, when the real child appears, most parents find in him a source of satisfaction and a stimulus for further dreams. But there are parents who can not reconcile themselves to the actuality.

The mother of a scrawny and unhappy looking boy of nine explained, confidentially, "I didn't want a child like that." She needn't have told me for I could see by her attitude that she would have loved to have him exchanged and credited. That she had never accepted the child was obvious, not alone from *her* words and manner, but from the appearance and bearing of the poor child himself. Mature attitudes allow most parents to accept their children as they are and to make of them the best that their capacities and our resources permit. But some need skilled help and counsel to this end.

Facing the Future

Having decided to establish a family, both wife and husband face the responsibility of taking as long a view as possible of the road ahead of them. Many young people today, especially those who have high intellectual and social standards, are afraid that children may interfere too greatly with their personal ambitions. How much time will they leave for attention to other concerns: for the

pursuit of some hobby, for recreational activities, for the cultivation of broad social interests?

Most men and women find in their children compensation for whatever alternatives have to be forfeited, but under modern living conditions these things do not automatically insure themselves. As we value our own minutes more, and as our opportunities for using them increase, we have to be ingenious and resourceful to save them. It is no service to the baby to devote ourselves so closely to the details of his physical care that we block our own growth.

There have been countless successful experiments by young parents who have found ways of pooling their resources in order to free themselves for more productive use of their time. A college student can ordinarily look after several young children for an afternoon and several parents together can pay a fair price that perhaps no one of them alone could afford. Help can be hired by the evening or by the hour and that is a reasonable addition to the cost of going out to an occasional lecture or concert, or social gathering. When one is living on a close budget, however, as most young couples are, three or four extra dollars do loom large. Young parents must remember, however, that the years during which these extra expenditures are necessary are relatively few—and they can never be recaptured. If we look upon the expense as a kind of insurance for future relationships between the parents—who are first of all men and women—it seems well worth while. Even where no ready cash is available, neighbors have found ways to exchange services, taking turns at relieving one another. Larger groups have cooperated—in nursery schools, for example—in attempts to solve this problem in a more organized manner.

Adults Have to Grow

Being a good parent means making oneself progressively un-needed. Instead of clinging to children, prolonging the children's need of them, parents should affirm the children's desire to be persons in their own right. Parents continue to be men and women, husbands and wives long after they cease to be full-time practicing parents. And in those roles, as men and women taking active parts in the life of their community and of their times, they would probably present to their children a more attractive and more significant picture of adulthood.

SUGGESTED READING

Selections from a list compiled by the Bibliography Committee of the Child Study Association of America

A COMMON SENSE BOOK OF BABY AND CHILD CARE by Benjamin Spock, M.D., Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946

An outstanding handbook on baby care by a pediatrician who understands the physical and the emotional needs of babies and their families. Also available as *Pocket Book of Baby and Child Care.*

ALL ABOUT FEEDING CHILDREN by Milton J. E. Senn, M.D., and Phyllis K. Newill, Doubleday, Doran, 1944

Comprehensive advice on the feeding of children from birth to adolescence, presented with psychological insight in a thoroughly readable style.

BABIES ARE HUMAN BEINGS by C. Anderson Aldrich, M.D., and Mary M. Aldrich, The Macmillan Company, 1938

A sympathetic interpretation of the physical and emotional development of the baby with practical management advice which takes cognizance of his total needs.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND THE CURRICULUM by Arthur T. Jersild and others, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1946

Analyzes and interprets in simple form the findings of extensive research in child development as it relates to the curriculum.

CHILDREN AND BOOKS by May Hill Arbuthnot, William R. Scott, 1947

Discusses the place of books and reading in children's lives, in school and out, with abundant selections from juvenile literature of today and yesterday.

CHILDREN'S CENTERS: A Guide for Those Who Care For and About Young Children. Edited by Rose H. Alschuler, issued by National Commission for Young Children, William Morrow and Company, 1942

Discusses with warmth and understanding problems and procedures in establishing and conducting centers for young children. Includes directions for making equipment.

FAMILY IN A WORLD AT WAR, THE, edited by Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Harper & Brothers, 1942

Twenty experts discuss the position of the family in wartime, stressing the concept that "family morale is the basis of all morale."

FATHER OF THE MAN: How Your Child Gets His Personality by W. Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, Houghton, Mifflin, 1947

A searching picture of children's growth emphasizing the force of social and cultural attitudes in shaping a child's personality.

HAPPY FAMILY, THE, by John Levy, M.D., and Ruth Monroe, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1938

Problems of marital adjustment and family living, discussed with psychiatric insight but in simple, popular style. The outlook is fresh and thought-provoking.

INFANT AND CHILD IN THE CULTURE OF TODAY: The Guidance of Development in Home and Nursery School by Arnold Gesell, M.D., and Frances L. Ilg, M.D., Harper & Brothers, 1943

Stresses the importance of understanding rate of growth and sequences in the development of children from infancy to five years.

JUST AND DURABLE PARENTS by James Lee Ellenwood, Scribner's, 1948

A father and grandfather surveys with humor and understanding the problems in personal development and family living.

LIFE AND GROWTH by Alice V. Keliher with the Commission on Human Relations, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938

An attempt to answer the questions of high school children about themselves and the world they live in. Addressed to young people and helpful to those who guide them.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR PERSONALITY by Winifred V. Richmond, Farrar and Rinehart, 1942

A warm, realistic book which reflects the author's genuine understanding of human behavior and personality development. Addressed to adolescents but also for parents.

NURSERY YEARS, THE, by Susan Isaacs, Vanguard Press, 1937

A deep-seeing interpretation of the behavior of young children in the light of their physical, intellectual and emotional development, offering concrete advice on home management.

OUR CHILDREN: A Handbook for Parents, edited by Dorothy C. Fisher and Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, The Viking Press, 1932

Thirty papers from authoritative sources dealing with various aspects of childhood, adolescence and the problems of family life. Sections on growth and development, on the home, the school and the outside world.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS by Dorothy C. Fisher, Harcourt, Brace, 1943

A wise and friendly discussion of the problems of young people in our changing American culture. Interprets for the average citizen the findings of the American Youth Commission.

PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND MONEY by Sidonie Matsner and Benjamin C. Gruenberg, The Viking Press, 1937

Clarifies the parents' understanding of the role of money in

family relationships and offers practical advice on teaching children its use.

PARENTS' MANUAL, THE: A Guide to the Emotional Development of Young Children by Anna W. M. Wolf, Simon and Schuster, 1941

The management of children discussed in warm, human terms to help parents understand themselves, their children and the deeper needs behind everyday behavior.

PARENTS' QUESTIONS by the Staff Members of the Child Study Association of America, Harper & Brothers, revised, 1947

Approaches parents' immediate questions as a key to their deeper, and often unformulated, problems and answers with advice calculated to increase their insight as well as their skill. Brief articles summarizing basic principles and illustrative case studies supplement the questions.

SEX GUIDANCE IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION: A Handbook for the Schools by Frances Bruce Strain, The Macmillan Company, 1942

An outstanding contribution on sex education addressed directly to the school. Stresses the responsibility of home, school and community.

SUBSTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH, THE, by George H. Preston, M.D., Farrar and Rinehart, 1943

A simple presentation of the basic principles of mental health and emotional adjustment.

WHAT BOOKS FOR CHILDREN? by Josette Frank, Doubleday, Doran, 1937

A thoughtful and provocative approach to the subject of children's reading, helpful to parents of children of all ages. Includes a graded book list prepared by the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association.

WHEN CHILDREN ASK by Margueritte Harmon Bro, Willet, Clark, 1940

A "good answerer" discusses ways of responding to children's questions on all subjects, especially questions about religion in its broadest sense.

WHEN YOU MARRY by Evelyn Millis Duvall and Reuben Hill, Association Press, 1945

Designed primarily as a textbook for a course on marriage and family life, but of interest to many young adults who are seeking information and perspective on their own problems.

WONDER OF LIFE, THE, by Milton I. Levine, M.D., and Jean H. Seligmann, Simon and Schuster, 1940

Sex information for the middle school child presented simply and without sentimentality by authors who understand children.

Pamphlets

ARTS AND CRAFTS, Arts Cooperative Service, 340 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, N. Y., 1948

BOY MEETS GIRL IN WARTIME, American Social Hygiene Association, Inc., 1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y., 1943

BOOKS OF THE YEAR FOR CHILDREN, Child Study Association of America,* revised annually

CHILD, THE FAMILY, THE COMMUNITY, THE, A Classified Booklist Selected by the Bibliography Committee, Child Study Association of America,* 1947

CHILDREN AND MUSIC, Bulletin of the Association for Childhood Education, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., 1948

DISCIPLINE: WHAT IS IT? by Helen Steers Burgess, Child Study Association of America,* revised edition, 1947

GOOD EDUCATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, New York State Council for Early Childhood Education, Box 98, Queens College, Flushing, N. Y., revised edition, 1947

GUIDING THE ADOLESCENT by D. A. Thom, M.D., Children's Bureau Pub. No. 225, U. S. Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., revised edition, 1943

INFANT CARE, Children's Bureau Pub. No. 8, U. S. Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., revised edition, 1945

KEEPING UP WITH TEEN-AGERS by Evelyn Millis Duvall, National Council on Family Relations, Public Affairs Pamphlet, No. 127, Public Affairs Committee, 22 East 38th Street, New York, N. Y., 1947

PARENTS' BOOKSHELF, A, Child Study Association of America,* revised annually

PLAY: A Yardstick of Growth by Clara Lambert, Play Schools Association, 119 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y., revised edition, 1945

POUND OF PREVENTION, A, How Teachers Can Meet the Emotional Needs of Young Children by James L. Hymes, Jr., New York State Committee on Mental Hygiene of the State Charities Aid Association, 105 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y., 1947

SOME SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN AGED 2-5 YEARS, New York Committee on Mental Hygiene of the State Charities Aid Association, 105 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y., 1947

TOYS FOR HOME AND SCHOOL, Progress Press, 2153 Florida Avenue, Washington 8, D. C., 1947

WHAT MAKES A GOOD HOME? The Beginnings of Emotional Health, by the Staff of the Child Study Association of America,* revised edition, 1947

WHAT MAKES GOOD HABITS? The Beginnings of Discipline, by the Staff of the Child Study Association of America,* 1944, 1947

YOUR CHILD FROM ONE TO SIX, Children's Bureau Pub. No. 30, U. S. Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., revised edition, 1945

*The Child Study Association of America, Inc., 221 West 57th Street, New York 19, N. Y.